# DEVELOPING A MINISTRY MODEL THAT FOSTERS UNITY IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

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# ABSTRACT

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by
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The context is Shekina House of Worship, Queens, New York. This study addresses disunity caused by internal conflict within the multicultural church. The hypothesis is, if members participated in a seven-week training on the biblical, historical, and spiritual basis for cultural unity, they will be equipped to foster harmonious relationships that will enhance unity. The hypothesis was tested by qualitative research methodology with nine participants. Data was collected using the Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory for pre- and post-test surveys, journalizing, observations, and focused group discussions. Results revealed that participants were prepared to achieve unity notwithstanding differences in their cultures.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I salute my church family, Shekina House of Worship, Queens, New York, for the support they accorded to me. Thank you, New Jersey Tabernacle, Plainfield, New Jersey.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to serve with you Apostle Dr. Patience O. Oti; thank you for your support and love.

I cannot forget the Nigerian Assemblies of God Fellowship (NAGF) USA. I appreciate all the leaders and members of this great fellowship; you all showed me brotherly love in immeasurable ways. I thank you Rev. Henry Bello; you are more than a fellowship president; you are a father indeed.

Worthy of mention is my father, Rev. Francis Enefazu Olukwu Ossai. Daddy, you know that we have come a very long way, and I deeply appreciate you for your example, direction, and support all these years; you have been my lifelong friend and my longest cheerleader. I really truly love you; thanks for all that you have done and all that you do.

To my siblings: Ifeoma, Chukwunweike "Chuks," Emeka, Chioma, Chinonso and Uchechukwu, and their families, I love you all and thank you all for all that you do.

Obviously, the acknowledgement list is not complete if my wife and son are missing. To my son – John – I bless the name of the Lord for you. For the joy and thrill that you bring on board, and for all those insightful questions and conversations. You are a gift from God, and I really love you. You remind me every day of the graciousness of God. I pray that you continually grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To my lovely wife – Rebecca Chioma 'Nkem' Enefazu-Ossai – you are the helpmeet prepped and marinated for me. I could never have come this far but for your sacrifice, support, commitment, and encouragement. I love you so much; I really do. Thank you for standing strong by me through "thick and thin." May God bless you "real" good.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to two women who were mothers to me. The first is my birth mother – Pastor Mrs. Ngozi Esther Ossai, who was called to glory after investing so much into me for the first seventeen years of my life. Mummy, I love you more than words can say; thank you for leading me to the shepherd of my soul, my Lord and Savior — Jesus Christ. Thank you for teaching me to try again and again, if I fail, till I get it right, till I win.

I also cherish the memory of my second mother; you fostered me into adulthood; your imprint is indelible; you were selfless and tolerant, accommodating and loving; I remember you always — Mrs. Rosemary Chukwunyeaka Ossai.

A special dedication to all the good mothers out there in the world.

## ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AST | Activity System Theory |
| CPT | Curricular Practical Training |
| CHAT | Cultural-Historical Activity Theory |
| DHS | United States Department of Homeland Security |
| DMIN | Doctor of Ministry |
| DSO | Designated School Official |
| FCT | Federal Capital Territory |
| KJV | King James Version |
| NAGF | Nigerian Assemblies of God Fellowship |
| NASB | New American Standard Bible |
| NOA | National Orientation Agency |
| NYSC | National Youth Service Corps |
| NIV | New International Version |
| NJT | New Jersey Tabernacle |
| PCS | Peace and Conflict Studies |
| SEVP | Student and Exchange Visitor Program |
| SHOW | Shekina House of Worship |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats |

| | |
|---|---|
| WAGF | World Assemblies of God Fellowship |
| WDCI | Welcoming Diversity Congregational Inventory |

Never mind about a thousand differences if thou art in Christ and I am in Christ, we cannot be two, we must be one. Let us love each other with a pure heart fervently. Let us live on earth, as those who are to live together a long eternity in heaven. Let us help each other's spiritual growth.

— Charles Haddon Spurgeon, "Unity in Christ, Sermon"

# INTRODUCTION

Shekina House of Worship (SHOW) as a congregation was born on 18th October 2009. From inception, she has had membership from people of diverse cultural backgrounds. This study addresses one of the challenges of church life, the problem of conflict and disunity resulting from the multicultural diversity of membership. Providing needed tools to enhance healthy relationships will produce sustainable growth and meaningful ministry in the multicultural congregation. Kenneth Davis did opine that the multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural outlook of the church in many cities has not been the same in the past years of the history of the church, and Shekina House of Worship is not an exception to this assertion. He succinctly stated, "In cities across this globe, God is already gathering together people of every language and tribe and people and nation to worship Him now and for all eternity."[1]

The anticipated outcome of the research project speculates that if the leaders and members of the congregation in which the study will be implemented participate in the training from the ministry model to be developed, then they will be provided with tools to build and continually enhance healthy and sustainable relationships. According to Davis, multicultural churches are microcosms that simultaneously reflect the fulfillment of

[1] Ken L. Davis, *Multicultural Church Planting Models*, Paper Submitted to Dr. David J. Hesselgrave, Ph.D. for the Course: Planting Churches in North America and Overseas at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Chicago, November 2001.

God's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) and foreshadow the reality of His heaven. This presents that they are an example of what God is doing on earth and a foretaste of what will be in eternity.[2] The diversity of different nationalities present in the church space is a pointer to the heart of God harvesting people from every nation. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many" (1 Corinthians 12:13–14).

A snapshot of this dissertation follows that chapter one, Ministry Focus, examines the experiences, challenges, strengths, weaknesses, skillsets, and interests that have characterized my character, pursuit, and growth in the life as a vocational pastor, counselor, and educator; hence, uncovering the desire to foster unity in personal and professional ministry leads to the focus of this Doctor of Ministry project at the context in Shekina House of Worship, in Queens, New York.

Chapter two, Biblical Foundations, examines the biblical text of 1 Corinthians 12. The initial and immediate ministry contexts were highlighted while projecting that the expected outcome of the study would be a practical model that fosters unity in a multicultural church setting. The New Testament city of Corinth was a cosmopolitan area with a diverse population as compared to modern day New York City with its complex urban center. In the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul insisted on the need for unity in diversity. The church is presented as one body with many parts. Paul emphasizes both diversity of ministries and unity of purpose. The church is made up of

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[2] Davis, *Multicultural Church Planting Models*, 2001.

different types of people from a variety of backgrounds with a multitude of gifts and abilities. On this essential truth the church finds unity.

In chapter three, the Historical Foundations, Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther is presented as a historical person for the study. His legacy was contextualized as a ministry model that would promote unity in a multicultural church. Crowther's approach to religion and tribalism in the world most populous black nation, Nigeria, is worthy of emulation to build the church communities today, especially Shekina House of Worship (SHOW), the context of this research.

Chapter four, Theological Foundations, explores the work of two theories — trinitarian theology and practical theology, which provides the theological anchor for the study that aims to develop a ministry model that will promote unity at SHOW, a multicultural church. Experience plays a part even when we are not aware of it, so having a proper knowledge of how to apply our faith is practical theology. The Trinity is equal in essence and participate in functional subordination to carry out the plans of God. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are personalities in the Godhead with unity that is unmatched.

Chapter five, Interdisciplinary Foundations, embraces the interdisciplinary approach incorporating theories from the field of psychology and also from peace and conflict studies. To drive and work towards promoting unity in a multicultural church calls for hard work and harmony; hence, the adoption of Lev Simkhovich Vygotsky and Aleksei Leont'ev s' Activity System Theory is imperative. Peacebuilding theories envisage a win-win result among parties in conflict; it envisages a multilateral rather than unilateral process of engagement in conflict management.

Lastly, chapter six, Project Analysis, presents the analysis of results from the implementation of the project at the ministry context with the research instrument used for pre- and post-test surveys, journal entries, and focused group discussions. The results proved that the training model designed was effective in achieving the object of the study, which is about fostering unity, notwithstanding differences in the cultures of the church setting.

# CHAPTER ONE

# MINISTRY FOCUS

## Introduction

In September 2022, I resumed a pastoral ministry position as an assistant pastor at Shekina House of Worship (SHOW) in Queens, New York. This ministry position was validated for my Curricular Practical Training (CPT), a program of The Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) which is a part of United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS).[1] This arrangement offered work-study opportunity for international students. SHOW is a Pentecostal Christian church that was born on October 18, 2009, following a series of discipleship sessions arranged for some converts. This singular discipleship opportunity soon metamorphosed into a meeting of more converts, friends, and family members. From these efforts a new church family was born and incorporated on November 6, 2009. My ministerial assignments were shepherding the flock of Christ by weekly teaching and preaching, leading virtual midweek intercessory prayer meeting, and the fortnightly Friday Bible study.

Other assignments include ministering the ordinances of the church; water baptism and the holy communion, performing the rites of marriage and burying the dead, facilitating the membership assimilation program, and executing pastoral care duties. As

[1] Student and Exchange Visitor Program, https://www.ice.gov/sevis.

a local church, SHOW is located in a busy part of the city — Rockaway Boulevard. There are plans to relocate the congregation to a property that will be owned. The membership demographics included families from the following Caribbean nations: Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Trinidad, and Tobago. There are also families from Nigeria. For this study, a functional definition for multicultural church is one where there are members or parishioners from different countries. This definition will be adopted because there are always different cultures within any country, so with several nationalities there is the multiplicity of culture.

Every church congregation is unique and different from any other as they fulfill God's end-time assignment of the harvest of souls. SHOW is a very special church setting because of the diversity and program design. Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko, the author of "Strategic Planning" in his contribution to the *Encyclopedia of the City*, opines that part of an organizations strategic planning process should include undertaking a SWOT Analysis.[2] As a tool, SWOT analysis allows an organization to understand her strengths and weaknesses which are internal factors and her opportunities and threats as external factors.[3] A SWOT analysis on this church presents the following findings.

*Strengths*

SHOW is home every week to biblically balanced and exegetically sound expository preaching and teaching. The congregation consists of members from different

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[2] Ari-Veikko Anttiroiko, "SWOT analysis," in Roger W. Caves, ed., *Encyclopedia of the City*, e-Book version (New York, NY: Abingdon, Routledge, 2005), 633.

[3] Carlos Nunes Silva, "SWOT analysis," in Roger W. Caves, ed., *Encyclopedia of the City*, e-Book version (New York, NY: Abingdon, Routledge, 2005), 653.

nationalities who have made SHOW their church family. The worship team and musicians are wonderful at their ministrations. The unique service time, held from 4:00 p. m. – 6:00 p. m., accommodates night workers who would ordinarily miss out on regular morning church service hours. Average weekly committed members are about eighteen (and about forty adherents) allowing for weekly relationship and fellowship. The congregation loves and supports foreign missions and missionaries. The current location of the church is very accessible. SHOW benefits from brotherly fellowship from her sister campus, the New Jersey Tabernacle in Plainfield, New Jersey.

*Weaknesses*

SHOW currently does not have any community outreach engagement program with the prospect of intentional evangelism aiming at the growth of the church. There is also space constraint. When there are over forty worshippers in a single service, the church hall becomes too small to contain attendees. The church is in a rented small-sized hall and there has been ongoing plans to get a much bigger worship location which has not happened. Another perceived weakness is that the pastor and assistant pastor both live out of state, and this has its impact on pastoral care ministry of members and other related ministry. The unique service timing would bar those who want conventional church service times.

*Opportunity*

SHOW has a huge potential for growth by developing vibrant community-based ministries because of the location of the church which will bring about prospects for

growth. The vibrancy of the city can be a big advantage for different ministry opportunities. Connecting to more people from the city's large population, making it a big hub for career growth among members because of the city's large economic area, is an advantage.

*Threat*

Crime and insecurity problems pose challenge for churches in the area. Also, as one of the most densely populated locations in the country, it is prone to attacks of varying types; examples are not limited to arson or church service interruption, vandalism of church properties among others. Terror attacks are likely considering the attack on the World Trade Center in Manhattan on September 11, 2001. New York can also be a health emergency hotspot as was the case during the Covid-19 pandemic.

*The Visioner – Apostle Dr. Patience Ogechi Oti*

Apostle Patience Oti[4], the founding and senior pastor of Shekina House of Worship in Queens, New York, is a church planter. She is also the pastor of New Jersey Tabernacle in Plainfield, New Jersey, and Maryland International Tabernacle in Beltsville, Maryland, and other church plants overseas. She is the president of Shekina Charities, a nonprofit entity with a flagship ministry, "The Tribe." The Tribe is the arm of Shekina Charities that reaches out to believers across denominational lines in daily devotional prayers and year-round Bible reading program that has ministered to many for

[4] Apostle Dr. Patience Ogechi Oti is the Senior Pastor and Pioneer Pastor of New Jersey Tabernacle in Plainfield, New Jersey, Shekina House of Worship in Queens, NY, and Maryland International Tabernacle in Beltsville, Maryland. She is also the president of Shekina Charities.

over two decades; they also minister to a sizeable number of widows and orphans overseas.

She has taken the word of God and her charity work to different parts of the world. She is an ordained minister of the Assemblies of God, General Council, USA and serves as the vice president of Nigerian Assemblies of God Fellowship, USA. Born into a Christian family, she gave her life to Christ at fifteen. She leads a "Tribe" of over 150 families that reads the Bible from cover to cover each year.[5] Her favorite Scriptures are Proverbs 22:29, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; He shall not stand before mean men" (KJV) and Psalm 110:3a, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (KJV).

*Geographical Descriptions of Context*

Shekina House of Worship is in Queens County, New York. As of the United States 2020 Census, the city population was 2,405,464 with a total area of 178 square miles (460 km2) and was founded in 1683.[6] The population of the city is distributed as follows: White 25.8%, Black or African American 16.8%, Asian 27.5%, Hispanic or Latino (of any race) 27.8%, and non-Hispanic 22.8%.

Queens, the easternmost and largest area of the five boroughs of New York City, is geographically adjacent to the borough of Brooklyn at the western end of Long Island.

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[5] Apostle Dr. Patience Oti. https://drpatienceoti.com/about/; Apostle Oti chronicles her life and her journey via journals. It is safe to say that her best-selling autobiography is already written. She is a published author of eight books, the last four being: *God Calls Me an Eagle, Sixty Pearls in Sixty Years, Stretch, Women Arise*. She is result-oriented, and her last-minute ideas are truly divine. Reading is one of her hobbies, and it just might be the only quiet time she has.

[6] Queens, New York, https://www.ny.gov/counties/queens.

Queens is one of the most ethnically diverse urban areas in the world as residents often closely identify with their neighborhood rather than with the borough or city. The borough is a patchwork of dozens of unique neighborhoods each with its own distinct identity.[7]

Queens has a variety of higher educational institutions such as St. John's University, Queens College in the CUNY system, and the Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology, among others.[8] Eighty-five percent of all K-12 students in Queens County are educated in public schools.[9]

SHOW Sunday services hold on site.[10] Other weekly meetings are conducted via Zoom. There is diversity in the ministry context with members from the Caribbean Island nations. Hence, there is the cross-cultural ministry growth and learning opportunity among us.

*Family Background*

This paragraph gives a brief on my family background as I was born at the Apapa Health Center in Lagos State,[11] Nigeria.[12] In birth-order, I am the second child (but the first son) of a family of seven children. Traditionally, in the custom of the place of my

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[7] Queens, New York, https://www.ny.gov/counties/queens.

[8] Queens, New York, https://www.ny.gov/counties/queens.

[9] Top 10 Best Queens County Public Schools (2022-23), https://www.publicschoolreview.com/new-york/queens-county.

[10] The unique service time is agreeable to every member as most of them in their work shift work nightshifts.

[11] Appendix 1, Lagos State.

[12] Appendix 2, Nigeria.

birth, names are not mere markers of identification; names are given with special reference to relationship with God who allows childbirth or in connection to circumstances, situation, or even events around the family, nuclear or even extended. "Emmanuel," (sometimes spelt as Immanuel), עִמָּנוּאֵל in Hebrew and Εμμανουήλ in Koine Greek, means: "God is with Us" and first mentioned in Isaiah (7:14). My middle name. "Ifeanyichukwu," is a name of Igbo extraction from Eastern Nigeria, (pronounced: /ee-FAHN-yin-TCHU-ku-u/), which means: "For nothing will be impossible with God" as presented in Luke 1:37, also nuanced as "Nothing is difficult with God," "Nothing is impossible with God," or "Nothing is hard for God."

I am from Delta State, one of the oil-rich states in Nigeria; however, corruption from the nation's ruling class has caused people of this region and all other oil-rich regions to live in poverty. Nigeria, (pronounced: /naɪˈdʒɪəriə/), is a country in the Western region of Africa.[13] It is the world's sixth most populous nation with a population of 225,082,083 (2022 est.)[14] making her the most populous black nation in the world. Nigeria is made up of Lagos State and thirty-five other states making her a country with thirty-six states, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. With a close look at the map of Africa,[15] Nigeria sits at the trigger of the continent of Africa; it is a country bordered in the east to Cameroon, in the west to Benin, in the north to Niger, and in the

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[13]Appendix 3, Africa.

[14] "Nigeria," The World Factbook (2022 ed.), Central Intelligence Agency/, https://www.google.com/search?q=The+World+Factbook+(2022+ed.)%2C+Central+Intelligence+Agency%2F&oq=The+World+Factbook+(2022+ed.)%2C+Central+Intelligence+Agency%2F&aqs=chrome.69i57j69i64.836j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8.

[15] Map of Africa is at the Bibliography, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Africa-highlighting-countries_fig1_332380173.

northeast by Chad. The southern base region is bordered by the Atlantic. Nigeria is a diverse, multicultural, and multinational state with the presence of over 250 ethnic groups, and over 500 distinct dialects or languages.

Born to Rev. Francis Enefazu Olukwu Ossai and Pastor (Mrs.) Ngozi Esther Ossai, I grew up in a nuclear family with both parents and my siblings. Hence, I am a second-generation minister of the gospel. My parents were not only ministers of the gospel, but they were also involved in helping people around our community. It was a great experience learning early in life the beauty of selfless service and sacrifice. I had the pleasure and blessing of growing up and having both parents around me with my siblings. I have six siblings: two brothers and four sisters. The vibrancy in our home was unmatched. Growing up our family creed was: "Do not steal. Do not tell lies. Respect older people. Never commit adultery. Always stay united as a family." As youths, my parents met as members of the church; they were both singers in the church choir. Their happy marriage union positively impacted on my entire life and that of my siblings. My youthful days were filled with so many memorable events and occasions: visits to the beach, visits to the children's amusement park, frequent trips to our country home. Going to church, visiting friends, attending lots of birthday parties and events were part of by growing up. My father was a big fan of wrestling, and he passed the wrestling love-bug to each of us. We would sit around the television watching wrestling every weekend. We also watched soccer as it was Nigeria's biggest sporting event.

I grew up in church as a pastor's kid (PK) and have been in ministry for fifteen years; hence, I have become familiar with the challenges of my ministry context and juxtapose my DMin learning and research to addressing one of those challenges. I hope

to be able to bring some innovation that will bring about some effective and quality changes in my ministry context.

After the death of my mother on June 2, 1995,[16] my father, (before remarring), raised us as a single parent for five years. He was particular in the unity of the family, dreading any form of dysfunctionality that could arise because of step-parenting. My father's impact on me was very huge. As an exemplary leader and father, he had and still has a very friendly relationship with all his children. He is one of my very good friends to this day. My siblings and I grew up together and he taught us daily from the Scriptures. We were not rich in monetary terms as we oscillated at different times between different levels of poverty, particularly when he entered ministry; but we were very rich in principles and values. He taught us virtues that could make for a victorious life. My mother was a very practical woman; she was very industrious as she characterized the virtuous woman found in Proverbs 31. Her humility, warmth, and genuine love for God and people are unprecedented. She was a praying mother. She loved the Lord and cared for people.

My new mom, Mrs. Rosemary Chukwunyeaka Ossai, had a warm personality. She supported my dad so much when she came into our lives and home. She is also very industrious, prayerful, and caring. I love her greatly; both moms were caterers. The bond of love and unity in the house did not dissipate, allaying the fear of disunity in the family that could have arisen due to a new blended family.

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[16] At the age of 17 years, 5 months, and 5 days on June 2, 1995; the passing of my mother during the birth of my youngest sister, was to me the most painful experience that could ever be. Some comfort in the little beautiful damsel that was introduced to the world. As a teenager, the scripture; "Precious in the sight of the Lord, Is the death of His saints" Ps 116:15 (KJV) was a huge consolation to me.

*Educational Development*

After high school, I bagged the equivalent of an associate degree in computer science and then a bachelor's degree in computer engineering; afterward, I ventured into ministry with training at the same Bible College where my parents were alumni. The nudge for vocational ministry started while in college; it took some time for me to fully determine that it was a nudge for God's service within that period. I had the confirmation and direction to ascertain the genuineness of this nudging and subsequently the call of God upon my life. Mentors and pastors started validating me for the work of ministry by giving me some assignments here and there within the church. Eventually, the leadership of my church attested and approved of my call. So, in 2006, after I completed college and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC)[17] program, and after a brief career with an engineering servicing firm which was less than a year, I enrolled in a Bible School for a two-year diploma in a Bible and Theology.

I had lots of significant good memories; firstly, I accepted Jesus Christ into my life as Lord and Savior as a teenager. That was a great significant turn-around moment in my life. My parents led a very practical and exemplary lives, and their testimonies and examples were pivotal in arresting my heart for Jesus Christ. While growing up, I knew that I needed a savior who alone could rescue me from my sin and ultimately from hell, because I wallowed in sin and its pleasures. One day, as a teenager the message of the

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[17] Otwin Marenin, "Implementing Deployment Policies in the National Youth Service Corps of Nigeria," Comparative Political Studies (London, UK: SAGE Publishers, 1990), 397–436. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) is a program set up by the Nigerian government during the military regime to involve Nigerian graduates in nation building and the development of the country aimed at uniting the diverse cultures of the nation. There is no military conscription in Nigeria, but since 1973 graduates of universities and later polytechnics have been required to take part in the National Youth Service Corps program for one year.

cross was shared as my parents ministered the gospel to me and I recognized my need for a savior. I confessed my sin and placed my faith in Jesus Christ. Upon conversion, I experienced a newness of life that I had never known up upon then. My whole life changed dramatically; my new-found love and relationship with Christ became a new adventure for me as I began to detest and abhor sin and its pleasures. To the glory of God, I have been in a growing relationship with the Lord for more than thirty years. My walk with him has been progressive.

Here and there, there were a few significant sad memories notable in my life. The most significant bad memory for me so far was the death of my mother on Friday, June 2, 1995, as I wrote my final exams in my senior high school graduating class. I was a teenager when this tragic event occurred, and the impact is still fresh today depending on how I recall the event. She passed away about three hours after the birth of my last sister hemorrhaging. After this occurrence, I was able to make it to college for my associate and first bachelor's degree. I have had the privilege of pursuing more schooling after that. I received a master's degree in education in Counselling Psychology and specialized in Adolescent Psychology and Youth Counselling Specialty at Nigeria's premiere University, The University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. I studied for a second Bachelor of Art Degree in Christian Education from Global University, Springfield, Missouri, United States of America. I also obtained my Master of Divinity (MDiv) Degree from Faith Bible Seminary, Lafayette, Indiana, United States of America.

I am a pastor with skills in local church strategic planning and in church leadership, administration, and growth. I am also a counselor with training in advanced counseling issues, conflict resolution, and multicultural perspectives on counseling. As an

educator I have trained in cross-cultural communication, and Christian adult education in cultural contexts granting the qualification that positions me to engage in a study on unity in my context.

*My Life in Perspective*

In my walk with the Lord, I have learned and grasped the knowledge and understanding that man is "the visible representation of the invisible God." This is so because we are heirs with Christ, who is the visible representation of the Father, who is invisible (Col 1:15). Who is "the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature . . ." (Heb 1:3). The image of God in man has to do with a functional system; God's functional system was reproduced in man. So, man was made to function like God. In other words, he was made in the realm of God so that he can relate with God — that is to fellowship with God. This understanding has been so helpful to me in my walk with God these years as it has re-oriented how I perceive everyone around me and the entire human race.

The excerpt below from Chris Banescu's book, *The Gospel, The Cure for Mankind's Suffering*, speaks well of the gospel as being the cure to all of life's problems.

> Perpetual crises and suffering, societal unrest, financial emergencies, institutional dysfunction, governmental tyranny, murder and mayhem, wars, riots, terrorism, and the persecution of the righteous and innocent continues to be the 'normal' state of affairs for people and countries around the world. Despite the constant assurances from most secular governments and politicians who promise us 'utopia on earth' in exchange for surrendering more of our freedoms and embracing their atheistic and progressive 'solutions,' things are getting worse, not better. This seems to be a persistent problem of all human civilizations throughout history, not just a defect particular to our own age. Terrific energy is expended – civilizations are built up – excellent institutions devised; but each time something goes wrong. Some fatal flaw always brings the selfish and cruel people to the top, and

> then it all slides back into misery and ruin. In fact, the machine conks. It seems to start up all right and runs a few yards, and then it breaks down, observed C. S. Lewis. What is the real source of this suffering and is there any hope for a cure? Jesus Christ, the Word of GOD, revealed to man the fullness of God's Truth and the wisdom of His laws. The Gospel embodies the principles and lessons from God that – if followed in all aspects of life and human relations both in and outside the home, in our communities, and in all areas of government, scientific inquiry, education, economics, culture, politics, even religion – can repair (not fully, only Christ's Second Coming will accomplish that) the rift between man and God and bring the human machine into true and real communion with our Creator. Only the Word of God can restore man's humanity! The solution to all our problems, all our strife, to all our suffering, all the abuses, political or otherwise, are there for the taking in the message of the Gospel. But that Gospel must be applied and made relevant to the current day issues and problems in all aspects of society. That's what Jesus Christ and all His Apostles and Disciples did![18]

I have also learned how-to advance "from personality-centered leadership to character-based leadership"[19] This is an approach of leadership, where the "character" of the leader overshadows the leader's "personality," knowing that this will bring more blessing to the people that are led. I have also been challenged to know that growing a vibrant church either as a new church "plant" or raising the bars and infusing life back into a stagnant (plateaued) church, "we can't rely on our own ingenuity, intellect, and human effort." Rather, we need God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

*Ministry Journey*

I worked with young people in the church. I was highly motivated by three of my father's colleagues. Rev. John Kalu Amah, PhD., was a district youth coordinator for

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[18] Chris Banescu, *"*The Gospel, The Cure for Mankind's Suffering, The Voice: Crying in the Wilderness," February 19, 2012, https://orthodoxnet.com/blog/2012/02/the-gospel-the-cure-for-mankinds-suffering/.

[19] Gene C. Wilkes, *Jesus on Leadership: Becoming A Servant Leader* (Carol Streams, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), Loc 1619.

many years. He was a huge motivation and blessing to me academically, intellectually, and in my spiritual development. Rev. Francis Chidi Okeremgbo, PhD and Rev. Azuka B. Obi were also instrumental to my growth. These three fathers helped to instill in me a passion for the Lord. They had a global perspective about their ministry and calling and they touched lives within their sphere. I remember that they were men who loved to pray and prayed passionately whenever they did.

I have grown in my grasp of the Great Commission that it is about God reaching people to save them from their sin. And that people are God's greatest assets for his church. Also, love is a useful ingredient in carrying out our God-given mission as we are to genuinely love people if we are to effectively minister to them.

As a minister, I have learned what it means to have a humble disposition. I have been ordained as an Assemblies of God minister from Nigeria with recognition among the World Assemblies of God Fellowship (WAGF). And to the glory of God, I have been ministering in that capacity.

When I came to America, I served as a pastoral intern in Faith Church, where I had limited ministerial function; so, I have learned that it is my faithful stewardship to God that counts and not the title or position that I hold.

My grasp of what ministry should be both locally and around the world is summed up in the Great Commission mandate, which is about God reaching people. It is also that people are God's greatest assets for his church (Matt 28:18–20). The church gathers for fellowship, for instruction in the Word – also, for the equipping of the saints, the observance of the ordinances (water baptism and the Lord's Supper), and for service to humanity. Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is

lost, to be worshiped by man, to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, and to demonstrate His love and compassion for all the world, the priority reason for the existence of the church can be summed as follows: "(i) To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1:8; Matt 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15,16). (ii) To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (1 Cor 12:13). (iii) To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph 4:11–16; 1 Cor 12:28; 14:12). (iv) To be a people who demonstrate God's love and compassion for all the world (Ps 112:9; Gal 2:10; 6:10; James 1:27)."[20]

I am called to minister as a pastor. The pastors' chief role is to love the Lord who is the head of the church; his other roles include that he provides broad oversight on the local church. He is to "teach and preach" God's word and in doing so, brings the people into a relationship with God. As a minister of the gospel, I am to prayerfully work in ensuring that I help others become God's very own possession, helping them know they are "visible representatives of the invisible God" and that we are made in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26–27; 5:3; 9:6).

The urgency of God's call on my life is premised on the scripture, "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed" (Rom 13:11). The pastor's role is multifaceted and is not limited to the following responsibilities: shepherding the flock of Christ by teaching and preaching God's word, administering the sacraments, pastoral care duties which includes visiting the sick at home or in the hospital, visiting those incarcerated and the needy, performing the rites of marriage, and burying the dead. In

[20] The General Council of the Assemblies of God, Statement of Fundamental Truths, https://ag.org/Beliefs/Statement-of-Fundamental-Truths.

addition, the pastor is basically a counselor as well as the chief administrator of the church he or she pastors (1 Tim 3:1-13; 5:7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1–4).

A pastor is saddled with ministering from "cradle-to-grave," the clergy vocation takes care of issues seemingly before cradle and all in-between the grave. From my experience, being a pastor opens one to be a likely person that will be contacted "if and when" people experience emotional, mental, spiritual, marital, and even economic challenges within the church and in the community. There is no doubt that the pastoral call is different from any other. The pastor is responsible for mobilizing the church for ministry activities like witnessing; and by so doing, the pastor aims at "the equipping of the Saints" (Eph 4:11) to build up the body of Christ where he or she has been called to serve. I have learned and continue to learn that in my ministry, I should not desire to make a name for myself rather to make God have the supreme place in my heart and be my affection. In my preaching assignments, I would ensure that my exegesis is doctrinally sound, and that my focus is Christotelic in the Old Testament and be Christ exalting in the New Testament.

The primary impact that my God-given ministry under my watch should have, and should be about, is the changing of lives and the transformation of the same to the glory of God. As a pastor, I am to constantly pray for God's flock under my care. I am to whole-heartedly love everyone that I am privileged to minister to every time and in every place. It is my responsibility as a pastor to help God's flock under my care to grow spiritually so that they can become more like Christ in conduct, in words, and to help them disciple others. That is a brief of my ministry life; next, I will address the statement of the problem for this study.

## Statement of The Problem and Hypothesis

Shekina House of Worship as a congregation was born on October 18, 2009. From inception, she has had membership from people of diverse cultural backgrounds. This study addresses one of the challenges of church life, the problem of rift and disunity resulting from the multicultural diversity of membership. Providing needed tools to enhance healthy relationships will produce sustainable growth and meaningful ministry in the multicultural congregation. Kenneth Davis, once the director of church planting with Project Jerusalem did opine that the multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural outlook of the church in many cities has not been the same in the past years in the history of the church, and Shekina House of Worship is not an exception. He succinctly stated, "In cities across this globe, God is already gathering together people of every language and tribe and people and nation to worship Him now and for all eternity."[21]

The anticipated outcome of the research project speculates that if the leaders and members of the congregation in which the study will be implemented, participate in the trainings from the ministry model, then they will be provided with tools to build and continually enhance healthy and sustainable relationships that foster unity among congregants. Davis opined that multicultural churches are microcosms that simultaneously reflect the fulfillment of God's Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) and foreshadow the reality of His heaven. Presenting that they are an example of what God is doing on earth and a foretaste of what will be in eternity.[22] The diversity of different

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[21] Ken L. Davis, "Multicultural Church Planting Models," Paper Submitted to Dr. David J. Hesselgrave, Ph. D. for the Course: Planting Churches in North America and Overseas at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Chicago, November 2001.

[22] Davis, "Multicultural Church Planting Models," 2001.

nationalities present in the church space is a pointer to the heart of God harvesting people from every nation. “For we were all baptized by one Spirit to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many” (1 Cor 12:13–14).

## Conclusion

Lessons learned early in ministry were prioritizing my immediate family over ministry; the order is my love for the Lord comes first, then family, and then ministry. Hence, I am considerate and patient with my wife. I have learned and I would say that I am still learning how to joggle my assignments and the other demands while loving and serving my wife well. As a parent with a very active and vibrant son, he helps to bring me to a place of deep reflection on forgiveness, fairness, and repentance as available from God our father. I love the young man so much. His presence is a daily reminder that God is graciousness. His first name is John. I try to spend quality time with him. He is an amazing bundle of joy. A pastor is a steward and 1 Cor 4:2 admonishes that, “moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” As a pastor, I desire to fulfill my ministry, and to also finish strong and be able to say as Apostle Paul said to Timothy, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Tim 4:7–8). Hopefully, my exposure and experience as a pastor will equip me to identify, analyze, and proffer clues on how to address whatever problems that will

be noticed in my ministry context. The next chapter lays the biblical foundation to the study.

# CHAPTER TWO

# BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

## Introduction

### A Ministry Model Promoting Unity in a Multicultural Church Plant: An Exegesis of 1 Cor 12:12–27

> 12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. 15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it (1 Cor 12:12–26, NIV).

This Biblical Foundations chapter presents a pivot for this study which aimed to arrive at a ministry model that would promote unity in a multicultural church plant by examining and engaging the exegesis of the 1 Cor 12:12–26 pericope. These verses of

scripture support the ministry interests and needs of the researcher in relation to the ministry context and focus on the research objectives for the Doctor of Ministry dissertation.

Based on a multi-context ministry scenario comprising what my immediate and initial contexts, the immediate contexts include: the New Jersey Tabernacle (NJT) in Plainfield, New Jersey; Shekina House of Worship (SHOW) in Queens New York; and the Tribe Ministry which are all vibrant arms of Shekina Charities. My initial ministry context is The Assemblies of God in Ikeja, Lagos District, Nigeria. For the purpose of this study, the immediate ministry context is at Shekina House of Worship (SHOW) in Queens, New York, from where ministration commenced on the of 4th September 2022.

The expected outcome of this study would be a practicable model for fostering unity in a multicultural church setting with SHOW as such example will bear on growth activating needed change paradigm and development in a local church community.

As for the first book of Corinthians, Alan F. Johnson opines that Paul's writing attracted "preachers, teachers and laypersons alike to its richly diverse landscape of problems found in any young, struggling church that is populated, as was Corinth, with people from an upwardly mobile culture infused with radical diversity of ethnic, religious, economic, and social composition."[1]

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[1] Alan F. Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, vol. 7, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 13.

## Authorship, Date and Genre

Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles (Rom 11:13–14; Gal 1:15–16; 2:7–8), wrote First Corinthians as his response both to what he had heard about the church and to the content of their letter to him, which likely contained both questions and challenges to his prior instruction.[2] His identification as the author of this book is contested by few.[3] It was written in Ephesus around the spring of AD 54 or 55.[4] Paul writes as an apostle of Jesus Christ to the church of God in Corinth and extends greetings of grace and peace from God and Christ (1:1–3).[5] Nathan Albright opines that; "Paul wrote in a genre that remains popular called the responsa, where someone starts with a question from someone else and then responds to it based on scriptural understanding and sound reason. This is a particular genre that remains popular in Jewish literature —the late Reform rabbi Jacob Zallel Lauterbach was noted for writing many of them, as well as within the contemporary Church of God."[6]

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[2] Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, vol. 28, The New American Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2014), 21.

[3] Donald A. Carson and Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 419.

[4] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 21.

[5] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 33.

[6] Nathan Albright, *Paul in 1 Corinthians: A Case Study of The Genre of Responsa, Edge Induced Cohesion*, February 9, 2019, https://edgeinducedcohesion.blog/2019/02/09/paul-in-1-corinthians-a-case-study-of-the-genre-of-responsa/.

## Historical, Social, and Cultural Context

Acts 18 lays out the sequence of events of the beginnings of the church at Corinth.[7] At the time Paul wrote, the Corinthian church was no more than five years old.[8] 1 Corinthians is the commercial culture that was prominent in Paul's Corinth.[9] It was Greco-Roman in character, yet a Roman colony answerable to Rome.[10] The history of ancient Corinth is the story of two cities: the old Greek city and the new Roman Corinth of Paul's time.[11] The Corinth of Paul's Day was a vibrant collection of socially and racially diverse people drawn to the city by the prospect of creating better lives for themselves and their families.[12]

This epistle was sent to the church in Corinth, a densely populated cosmopolitan, wealthy, and tourist location of the New Testament. "Paul's Corinth was at once the New York, Los Angeles, and Las Vegas of the ancient world."[13] Gordon D. Fee's comparison of ancient Corinth to New York becomes interesting based on the backdrop that the ministry context of this study is in one of the five borough of New York City — that being Queens. New York is the most ethnically diverse, religiously varied, commercially driven, famously congested, and, in the eyes of many, the most attractive urban center in

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[7] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 19.

[8] William Baker, "1 Corinthians," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 3.

[9] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 15.

[10] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 14.

[11] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 18.

[12] Baker, *1 Corinthians*, 3.

[13] Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 3.

the country.[14] The old Corinth dates back to prehistoric times that, by the eighth century BC, grew to be one of the wealthiest and most prominent cities in Greece and a rival to Athens located approximately fifty miles to the east.[15]

Carson and Moo reminds of the three scenarios that Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians; the first deals with the relationship between men and women, especially as it was surfacing in a dispute over the issue of head covering for women (11:2–16). The second addresses abuses at the Lord's Supper (11:17–34). And the third deals with the distribution and exercise of the Spirit's gifts (12:1–14:40), especially the relative value of prophecy and tongues (14:1–25).[16]

In 1 Corinthians 12:12–26, Paul addresses believers in the church in Corinth, a melting-pot of a city with nationals who are Greeks, Latins, Syrians, Asiatics, Egyptians, and Jews. Corinth was an important city indeed with intellectually alert, materially prosperous, but morally corrupt residents who bought and sold, laboured and revelled, quarrelled and hob-nobbed in the city and its ports.[17] It is hoped that the message

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[14] G. Lankevich, "New York City," Encyclopedia Britannica, March 29, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/place/New-York-City; More on the character of New York City as observed by Lankevich, "… No other city has contributed more images to the collective consciousness of Americans: Wall Street means finance, Broadway is synonymous with theatre, Fifth Avenue is automatically paired with shopping, Madison Avenue means the advertising industry, Greenwich Village connotes bohemian lifestyles, Seventh Avenue signifies fashion, Tammany Hall defines machine politics, and Harlem evokes images of the Jazz Age, African American aspirations, and slums. The word tenement brings to mind both the miseries of urban life and the upward mobility of striving immigrant masses. New York has more Jews than Tel Aviv, more Irish than Dublin, more Italians than Naples, and more Puerto Ricans than San Juan. Its symbol is the Statue of Liberty, but the metropolis is itself an icon, the arena in which Emma Lazarus's "tempest-tost" people of every nation are transformed into Americans—and if they remain in the city, they become New Yorkers."

[15] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 18.

[16] Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 417.

[17] Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 7, Tyndale New Testament Commentarie*s* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 20-2.

communicated to the church in Corinth in Pauls' day would resonate with Shekina House of Worship in modern day New York and other congregations in similar cities around the world.

## The 1 Cor 12:12–26 Pericope

In 1 Corinthians Chapter 12, Paul the apostle insisted on the need for diversity in unity.[18] Oropeza identified the theme of solidarity throughout the 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 pericope that less recognized members who could be "less important, insignificant, and unpresentable" ought to be honored and to receive greater presentability,[19] certainly not to the detriment of others. Solidarity allows for community. Gardner expresses the role of community in fulfilment of the Spirit's work that connects all at the point of our conversion, where there is neither distinction nor superiority as all are together in purpose.[20]

Paul D. Gardner's division of this pericope is adopted for this study. "Spiritual People Use 'Grace-Gifts to Build Up the Body of Christ'" (12:12–26).[21]

a. All Are Members of the One Body (12:12–14),

b. All Are Necessary to the Body (12:15–16),

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[18] Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 417.

[19] B. J. Oropeza, *1 Corinthians*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 167.

[20] Paul D. Gardner, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 542.

[21] Gardner, *1 Corinthians* 539-547; Gardner's division of this pericope will be adopted for this study. [21]

c. All Depend on Others in the Body (12:17–21),

d. All Must Care for Each Other (12:22–26).

Johnson opines that the theme in this pericope is the many-parts-one-body' idea.

## All Are Members of the One Body (12:12–14)

The use of "body" in (12:12–14) is metaphoric as it links the (12:12–26) pericope to (12:4–11) by the "just as" conjunction and further links to (12:1–3). Paul had used the "one body" and the "one spirit" imagery in (6:15–17). Also, the import he made that we are bodies of the Holy Spirit's temple (6:19–20) in relation to the Lord's supper – "body and blood" of Christ (10:16; 11:27, 29). This could be a revelation that the "body" narrative he presented reflects the one "unit" nature of the Church. Also, he presented "we, who are many, are one body" (10:17). He continued in (12:12–14) where he presents the church as "one body with many parts" — "though one, has many parts." That the church is one body presents also that it has many parts which will explain that there are several components that comprise the church as a body, so much as a physical body is a component of many parts.

The repetition of the motif of "the one and the many"[22] is quite impressionable in this text of scripture, as ". . . all its many parts form one body," because the body needs all its diverse parts to be a body.[23] An example is to be a member as a unit and as whole, ". . . so it is with Christ"[24] who in John 17:11b supplicated ".Holy Father, protect them by

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[22] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 294.

[23] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 216.

[24] John 17:20–23.

the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one." Jesus' prayer of the unity for the church at about the time of his exit from his earthly ministry is directional to the essence of unity among brethren.

In 13b, "we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body." Paul presents the place of the church as a body with a "we," which would be qualifying each entity and at the same time the various many "parts" of the church as represented in each individual. So, each person and each church are all baptized in one spirit. Here, Paul presents that the Holy Spirit is the author of unity, so that each "one" body becoming a member of the whole. Paul emphasizes the Spirit as the source who enlivens and enriches the body of Christ.[25] To form one body, precludes our encounter with Christ. In the context of Paul's writing, the forming of one body is with our relationship in Christ and not outside of him, as there is a transformation that occurs from converting from pagans to Christians, which is the introduction into the community of Christian believers[26] such that with this new identity there should not be any form of segregation. This agrees with David Prior's position that "there can be no legitimate exegesis which divides Christians into two (or more) groups, let alone into first-class and second-class Christians."[27]

Johnson observes that, "Paul stresses both diversity of ministries and unity of source, based not on the personal abilities or the spiritual status of individuals who manifest these Spirit expressions, but on God the Spirit"[28] whose fountain the body

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[25] William Baker, "1 Corinthians," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2009), 182.

[26] David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians: Life in the Local Church, The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, UK: Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 211.

[27] Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 210.

[28] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 216.

drinks from. Paul further speaks of the mix found in the church, "whether Jews or Gentiles," the diversity that is obvious in the origin or nationality of all that has been baptized by one spirit, forming one body will not be any reason for dismembering the "one body." The cosmopolitan nature of Corinth presents the ground for emphasizing unity distinction between people of diverse cultural background; hence the "baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body" will not be discriminated at by nationality nor would it be by class: being slaves or free born. Diversity has the tendency to present difficulties, even more "it offered immense potential for a full-blooded testimony to Christ. The more we today draw on the richness of the world-wide community of believers, the more pungent and attractive will be our testimony."[29]

**All Are Necessary to the Body (12:15–16)**

In (vv. 15–16) Paul continued to buttress his point with the analogy of the human body. This time he communicated with two body parts; the foot and the ear as representative of all others and stressed their intended exclusion from the body. From this scenario, frictions abound in relationships everywhere, not excluding the community of believers which could arise from a myriad of reasons.

Christensen and Johnson listed various relational strife seen in the New Testament as:

I. dissension (s:) Acts 15:2; Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 12:25; Gal 5:20; 1 Tim 6:4; Titus 3:19;
II. dispute(s): Luke 22:4; 2 Cor 7:5; 1 Tim 6:4; Jas 4:1–2;
III. quarrel(s)(ing): Rom 13:13; 14:1; 1 Cor 1:11; 3:3; 2 Cor 12:20; Gal 5:20; 2 Tim 2:23–24; Titus 3:2, 9;

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[29] Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 212.

IV. division(s): 1 Cor 10:1; 11:18; Titus 3:10; Jude 1:19;

V. factions: 1 Cor 11:19; Gal 2:12; 5:20; vi. conflict(s): Jas 4:1–2, and vii. strife: Gal 5:20., observing that:

> There is direct or indirect evidence of conflict in every New Testament book: conflict in the Gospels between Jesus and various opponents, including his own disciples, and among his disciples; conflict among the earliest Christians in the Jerusalem church and at the Jerusalem Council; Paul's conflicts with Judaizing opponents in Galatians, especially regarding his authority as an apostle, and with the Corinthians on at least nine issues, conflicts among Christians in Philippi and Thessalonica; conflict between wealthy and poor in James, between Christians and the world in 1 Peter and 1 John; an internal schism in 1-3 John; intra-church conflict and cosmic conflict in Revelation.[30]

A body part does not cease to be a member of the body simply because it says so. "Individual members cannot contract out" whether they are "less gifted members of the church" or members who have "wonderful and spectacular gifts."[31] Morris cited Chrysostom who years ago had observed that the foot contrasts itself not with the eye, but with the hand, presenting how prone we are to envy those who surpass us a little, rather than those who are patently in a different class.[32] Every member of the body of Christ is important; the interplay of roles based on individual distinction and the peculiarity of their giftedness and personality needs to be harnessed for the body to grow.

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[30] James Christensen and Thomas F. Johnson, "Strife in the New Testament and Its Implications for the Church Today," Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/4537606/.

[31] Leon Morris, "1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary," vol. 7, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 169.

[32] Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 169.

**All Depend on Others in the Body (12:17–21)**

From (12:15–16) and like v 21, we see that all parts of the body are important. Further in (17–20), Paul delineates that the parts of the body must be different to complement and enhance each other. He was not advocating homogeneity in the body; rather, that the heterogeneous nature of the human body results in homogeneous harmony. By implication, the body of Christ is heterogeneously designed to bring about a unifying output that brings glory to God. The beauty of this arrangement is that God is the architect, and He has arranged the body as he pleased,[33] else, "what a comical or grotesque sight it would be for the body only to be one giant hand or eye! All the parts are essential."[34]

As members of the body of Christ, there is the temptation to assume that others would act and reason like we do; there is the tendency to associate and relate with persons who are similar with us in many ways leading to isolation in some sense with others who are perceived different from us. God would rather that those differences be molded into a special unity which is demonstrably his own doing.[35] Just as it is absurd to think that the body is made up of only the more prominent parts, so is it to think that the body could function without its less prominent parts,[36] sealing the debate about members of the body of Christ with their varying abilities and graces converging as a unit to execute God's kingdom tasks.

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[33] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 295.

[34] Baker, *1 Corinthians*, 183.

[35] Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 214.

[36] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 232.

David Prior hints that "the community which is alive to the Spirit is committed by Scripture to the costly struggle of living out the reconciliation of all men to one another and to God by uniting black and white, intellectual and action-oriented businessman, new believer and mature disciple, Jew and Gentile, young and old, male and female, single and married."[37] The wisdom of God and his sovereignty in the arrangement of the body the way it is, to bring about unity, can never be underestimated;[38] all the many parts of the body have an interest in seeing that all the rest of the parts are valued.[39]

## All Must Care for Each Other (12:22–26)

On the dependency of the body part on each other (12:17–21), Paul contrasted between the "weaker and less honorable" parts and the supposedly "strong and honorable" part of the body; this acknowledges that those who appear to be weak and lowly esteemed by normal social estimates should receive all the more attention for how vital they are to the church.[40] The uniformity of acceptance to all body parts, regardless of how they are "measured or valued," should ensure that no special care is lavished on one member to the detriment of other members.[41] David Prior raised a query when he asked, "do we know one another well enough in our local churches to be able to rejoice or to suffer at appropriate occasions?"[42] Every church community should embrace a culture of

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[37] Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 214.

[38] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 295.

[39] Baker, *1 Corinthians*, 183.

[40] Baker, *1 Corinthians*, 183–184.

[41] Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 171.

[42] Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 216.

fellowshipping that ensures that not only will the "weak" brethren be indispensable, but the 'strong' are not put away; the pain of any member, "weak" or "strong," should be felt by every other member.[43]

Alan Johnson asserts the tendency to showcase very successful Christians who have been recognized for their achievement are wealthy and are pillars in their various endeavors in society. He advocates that members who have less visibility and have been exceptionally faithful amidst "suffering and loss," who have "given away great wealth, are self-effacing and have showed restraint in material possessions; they exhibited downward mobility in seeking to serve Christ and are filled with the fruit of the Spirit despite relative obscurity" and others like them should be those to be well showcased in the church.[44]

Paul presents that we pay particular attention to the less presentable parts of our physical bodies; we should be similarly ready to give special care to "weaker" brothers and sisters, those who might feel readily dispensable but are in fact vital to the health of the body.[45] In v 25, Paul admonished that "there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other." God has combined the parts of the body for the purpose of unity and mutual concern of members of the body for one another.[46]

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[43] Baker, 1 Corinthians, 184.

[44] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 234.

[45] Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, 215.

[46] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 295.

God gives honor to those parts of the body that naturally lacked it. The unity of the body is seen in both suffering and honor. The suffering of any one member means that the whole body suffers. It is impossible for one part of the body to be in pain and the remainder at peace.[47] Our natural bodily parts are so blended that when part suffers pain, the whole body suffers with it.[48]

## Analysis and Synthesis of Scriptural Text

Paul compared the body of Christ to a human body. Each part has a specific function that is necessary for the body as a whole. The parts are different with purpose, and in their differences they must work together. Christians must avoid two common errors: being proud of their abilities or thinking that they have nothing to offer to the body of believers because they have little or no gifts. Instead of comparing ourselves to one another, we must use our different gifts together to build synergy that will enhance and build the body of Christ, ensuring that we spread the word — the good news of salvation as a team.

The church is composed of many different types of people from a variety of backgrounds with a multitude of gifts and abilities. Taylor opines that the body of Christ is composed of individually gifted members,[49] although it is easy for these differences to divide people as was the case in the church in Corinth. But despite the differences, all believers have one thing in common and that is faith in Christ. Hence, the differences in

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[47] Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 171.

[48] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 235.

[49] Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 28.

giftedness should bring about togetherness. On this essential truth, the church finds unity. All believers are baptized by one Holy Spirit into one body — the church. We do not lose our individual identities, but we have an overriding unity in Christ. When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit takes up residence and he or she is born into God's family. As a member of God's family, we may have different interests and gifts, but we have a common goal.

Using the analogy of the body, Paul emphasizes the importance of each member of the church, that if a seemingly insignificant part is taken away, the whole body becomes less effective; so for a part to think they are more important than others is pride; so it is to also thinking of being less important than others. The part of the whole that seems weak or less gifted, those who seem unimportant, should not be looked down on, neither should they be jealous of others who have impressive gifts. The human body is a description of diversity, "many parts," yet a description of unity, "one body." This communicates a picture of "unity in diversity." The body is one, although with many members, many parts. Believers are different and perform different functions, yet all combine to make one functioning unit, the body. Hence, the body of Christ is so described. In the 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 text of scripture, Paul is communicating wholeness and singleness of intent and purpose to our God-given assignment as Christians. Instead of comparing ourselves with each other in ways that divide, we should embrace our uniqueness and mesh to advance the course of Christ as becoming of our joint primary assignment.

All believers are baptized into one Holy Spirit and into one body of believers which is the church. For as ". . .  we were given the one spirit to drink," it

is the same Holy Spirit that indwells every believer. Paul admonished that no one should feel superior about his or her gift, as no one is to feel less superior. Instead, all should use the gifts God has given to them to serve. We should commit and submit our gifts in our differences and wholeheartedly serve with what was given in such a way as enhance others for the common goal. We should lovingly seek to embrace and enhance each other's gift. Paul, in Romans 12:15, had admonished the promotion of community that we are called to rejoice with those who do rejoice and to weep with those who do weep. Believers are in the world together to fulfill a singular assignment for the kingdom of our Lord.

## Scriptural Text and Doctor of Ministry Project

How would the scriptural text, 1 Cor 12:12–27, of this biblical foundation underpin this study which is to investigate the development of the ministry model that will foster unity in a multicultural church? This brings to bear the unofficial moto of the Swiss Confederation: "*Unus pro-omnibus, omnes pro uno*," which is Latin for "One for all, all for one." In v 12, we see that in and with Christ, believers are one though many and although many are one. Jesus, in his prayer to the father in John 17:20–21, prayed, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." Jesus praying "that all of them may be one" is a bedrock of the testimony of the church because the world by the reason of the unity of the members of the body may believe of the truth that Jesus is the sent one. Furthermore, our identity will no longer be of our nationality of

being “Jews or Gentiles,” nor of our social standing of “slave or free,” but by the one bond of the baptism of the same Spirit. In the same token, our identity will not be by the reason of relevance or irrelevance nor of a criterion of who is more important nor of who is less important. Our approach will be to “outdo one another in showing honor” to one another. Paul in Galatians 3:26–29 further asserts that,

> In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29).

It will apply that the essence of unity in the local church should mirror the unity that is found in Christ as becoming the basis for membership in the body of Christ.

## Conclusion

1 Corinthians 12:12–26 provokes the following inquiry: what should be the response of believers when a fellow believer is honored? Or what would the response be when they are suffering? We are called to rejoice when someone is rejoicing and to weep with those who weep. Too often, members are jealous of those who rejoice and separate themselves from those who weep. Believers are in this world together; there is no such thing as individualistic Christianity. God designed the relationship between the parts of the body using Paul’s analogy that they are mutually interdependent and each receives equal honor, respect, and care from the others so that there is no status competition among them.[50] We cannot individually concern ourselves only with ourselves, the church

[50] Johnson, *1 Corinthians*, 216.

needs to get involved in the lives of others because we are all co-dependent on one another.

Every congregation is unique, obviously because different people group make up these different congregations and attempts at fostering homogeneity in congregations is not only wrong but not what is to be prescribed neither was it the essence of 1 Corinthians 12 from verse 12. The attempt at Shekina House of Worship in fostering unity will be as a result of lessons communicated by Paul where there is no distinction among members of the congregation. The next chapter, the Historical Foundations, is a framework for this study visiting what is gleaned, in part, from history that gives evidence of others at work in this endeavor.

# CHAPTER THREE

# HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

## Introduction

This chapter mirrors the life and legacy of Bishop Samuel Ajayi (Adjai) Crowther (c. 1807-1891) as the historical person for this study; his sojourn on this planet was the embodiment of the cry and desire of his people in Nigeria with his life becoming the foreshadow of the expected reality for Nigeria and Nigerians. Nigeria holds a pride of place on the continent of Africa and her stride on the global scene would be incomparable to any nation on the globe. If every Nigerian was characterized by the qualities and virtue bestowed by Bishop Samuel Crowther, the nation would be more than special. The geo-political landscape of Nigeria is fraught with tension due to her diverse nationalities. Nigeria is the world's most populous black nation and the most populous on the continent of Africa with a 2023 population estimate of 223,800,000,[1] The World Factbook's estimate of 236,747,130 people (2024), makes her the sixth most populous nation globally — only behind China, India, United States, Indonesia, and Pakistan. More than 62% of her nationals are less than twenty-four years making her a youthful population. About 46% of this oil-rich nation identify as Christians with over 500 indigenous languages, having Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo (Ibo) as generalized and most significant

[1] United Nations Population Fund, "World Population Dashboard," https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population-dashboard.

languages, while English is her official language.[2] The church in Nigeria has become a significant force in global Christianity and has produced many highly influential figures in Christianity[3] of whom Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther is the foremost.

Nigeria's current national anthem, adopted eighty-even years after Crowther's demise, as seen in the lyrics, revealed not only his desire but his activities, which were geared at attaining unity and exemplifying the same to all her citizens. Nigeria's current national anthem, "Arise O Compatriot."[4] [5] was written by Babatunde A. Ogunnaike, John A. Ilechukwu, Eme Etim Akpan, Sota Omoigui, and P. O. Aderibigbe. The Nigerian Police Band, directed at the time by Benedict E. Odiasse, made the Music,[6] whereas Professor Felicia Adebola Adeyoyin authored the national pledge[7] that has been in use since 1978 substituting the old one, "Nigeria We Hail Thee."[8]

Nigeria needs to attain the desired dream of the patriarch Samuel Ajayi Crowther, even after 132 years after his demise. The following lines, "one nation bound in freedom,

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[2] Central Intelligence Agency, "Nigeria: People and Society," https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/nigeria/#people.

[3] Babatunde Oladimeji, "A History of Charismatic Influence on the Anglican Church in Nigeria," *Asian American Theological Forum* 4, no 1 (2017): 10-17.

[4] Samuel Oyeyemi Agbeleoba, "Nigeria's National Anthem: A Text Linguistic Exploration," *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research* 6, no 1 (2018): 31-38. ISSN 2053-6313 (online).

[5] Victor Olugbenga Fawole, "Arise O' Compatriots: Let's Talk about the National Anthem – Analyses and Commentary," https://www.academia.edu/14919458/ARISE_O_COMPATRIOTS.

[6] Gbenro Adegbola, "The death of another Unsung Hero: Babatunde Ogunnaike, one of the writers of the National Anthem," Feature Story, News Wing, February 24, 2022, https://newswings.com.ng/feature-the-death-of-another-unsung-hero-babatunde-ogunnaike-one-of-the-writers-of-the-national-anthem/.

[7] Felicia Adeyoyin, "Author of Nigeria's National Pledge, Dies at 83," *News*, May 3, 2021, Foundation for Investigative Journalism, https://fij.ng/article/prof-felicia-adeyoyin-author-of-nigerias-national-pledge-dies-at-83/.

[8] Nigeria's old anthem, "Nigeria We Hail Thee," was composed by a British ballet musician, and the lyric by her fellow national, both of whom won monetary prizes for their effort.

peace, and unity" and ". . . to build a nation where peace and justice shall reign," the last lines of the national anthems' first and second stanzas is an awaited dream. However, despite what Crowther epitomized, absolute freedom, peace, and unity remain the bane of Nigeria's national existence. Crowther lived out the last line in the national pledge of allegiance: "To defend her unity and uphold her honor and glory."

Words like unity, love, loyalty, and peace embedded in the nation's anthem indicate the desired realm of a very heterogeneous society needing those elements to maintain her nationhood.[9] Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther's legacy will be contextualized for a ministry model that would promote unity in a multicultural church that has traces of division which is the research objective for this Doctor of Ministry (DMin) study.

## The Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther

Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a pioneer in many ways, is Nigeria's foremost Christian. He was a recorded clergyman who was a missionary, a linguist, and the first African Anglican Bishop of West Africa. In the preface of Jesse Page's biography; *The Black Bishop: Samuel Adjai Crowther*, Eugene Stock writes:

> Samuel Crowther's career was unique. A kidnapped slave in 1821, a rescued enslaved person in 1822, a mission school-boy in 1823, a baptized Christian in 1825, a college student in 1826, a teacher in 1828, a clergyman in 1843, a missionary to the country whence he had been stolen in 1845, the founder of a new mission in 1857, the first negro Bishop in 1864, — where is the parallel to such a life? Furthermore, what a familiar figure he was to us at home! Ten times in seventy years, he came to England. In his later years as Bishop, he was in constant demand as a speaker all over the country, and his absolute unselfishness and cheerful readiness to be at everybody's service were an example indeed to

[9] Samuel Oyeyemi Agbeleoba, "Nigeria's National Anthem: A Text Linguistic Exploration," *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research* 6, no 1 (2018): 31-38. ISSN 2053-6313(online).

> 'deputations.' If he had accomplished nothing in Africa, he would still have been a valuable helper of the missionary cause among ourselves.[10]

Stock's interrogation, "… where is the parallel to such a life?" directs an unresolvable demand as a task for historians, church historians in particular, missiologists, and other experts in church history. For Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (c. 1807-1891), his life had a resounding impact in his home country Nigeria, the land of his emancipation Sierra Leone, and the United Kingdom. Crowther's life is one that is worthy of emulation and stands as an example even for individuals in SHOW.

There is no mistaking that he was a hero of the Christian faith both in his time and centuries after he had left this earth to meet his savior, whom he severally praised for saving him not only from the slave trade of man but of more splendidly slavery of "sin" that shackled him, all his fellow citizens, and the entire human race. The scope of this paper is limited, as only some of his outstanding achievements can be presented here, of the legacy of a man who lived for almost nine decades, considering that historians like Jesse Page had a biography on Samuel Ajayi Crowther that is 500 pages long.

## The Bishop from Africa to Africa

Europeans who visited the coastal regions of West Africa got into buying enslaved West Africans such that in 1450 their purchases were about 600 persons per year. In 1780, the purchase number had grown to about 50,000 per year.[11] Hence, in 1821

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[10] Jesse Page, *The Black Bishop: Samuel Adjai Crowther* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), vi.

[11] Patrick Manning, "Slavery and Slave Trade in West Africa, 1450-1930," The History of African Development, https://www.aehnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Manning.Slavery-and-Slave-Trade-in-West-Africa-1450-1930.pdf.

as a teenager, say around age thirteen, Crowther was taken as an enslaved person[12] by a combination of Fulani and Oyo Muslim raiders[13] who sold him as a slave to Portuguese traders for the transatlantic market after he had been traded six other times from one slave trader to another.[14] Eugene Stock reports that the town of Oshogun, which is Crowther's place of birth, was destroyed by Fulah slave-hunters, and his tribesmen, the Egba's, who were inhabitants that were carried away as captives; unlike Joseph in Genesis 37:28 who was sold for shekels of silver by his brethren, Crowther and other like him were traded by barter and they were bartered mostly for tobacco and rum.[15]

Before this time, the British Parliament had abolished the slave trade, and there were treaties with other nations to abolish the traffic of humans; so the English were constantly cruising the coastline in surveillance. One of the many rescue missions saw the British naval squadron intercepting in April 1822 the Portuguese ship in which Ajayi and others were being transported as enslaved people.

They were eventually put ashore in Sierra Leone "like thousands of other uprooted, disorientated people from inland Africa."[16] A British policy at the time required

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[12] In referring to the Day of his captivity, Crowther would say, "From this period I must date the unhappy, but which I am ever taught in other respects to call a blessed, day which I shall never forget in my life. I call it an unhappy day because it was the Day on which I was violently turned out of my father's house and separated from my relatives, and in which I was made to experience what is called to be in slavery. Concerning being blessed, it was the Day that Providence had marked out for me to set out on my journey from the land of heathenism, superstition, and vice to where the Gospel is preached."

[13] Andrew F. Walls, "Crowther, Samuel Adjai (or Ajayi),"in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York, NY: Macmillan Reference U.S.A., 1998), 160-161.

[14] Andrew F. Walls, "The Legacy of Samuel Ajayi Crowther," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16, no 1 (1992): 15-21.

[15] Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society, its Environment, its Men and its Work*, vol. 1 (London, UK: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 450.

[16] Walls, "The Legacy of Samuel Ajayi Crowther," 15-21.

that enslaved people be sent to Sierra Leone and not back to Nigeria, where an evangelistic community — a light for the dark continent had been set up by abolitionists and missionaries in this country on the Atlantic Ocean.[17] The young Crowther and other family members had been taken captive when their village was raided; after which they were marched for twenty miles from their town to another. Every form of barbarity followed as the old and sick, not strong enough to contain the whip of their captors, were either killed or left to die of hunger and exposure.[18] Page recounts entries from Crowther's journal:

> I was thus caught with my mother, two sisters, one infant about ten weeks old, and a cousin while endeavoring to escape. Our conquerors were Eyó Mohammedans, who led us away through the town. On our way, we met a man sadly wounded in the head, struggling between life and death.[19]

Crowther contemplated suicide before being sold to the white man, but providence prevented him from such a rash intention. Soon the human cargo got loaded for shipment, and before long, masters and slavedrivers were ashore and sailing until the watchful eyes of the British soldier got them rescued after a long chase. Of the two vessels full of rescued enslaved people, only H.M.S. Myrmidon reached Bathurst in Sierra Leone with little Crowther on board as the other vessel got wrecked in the storm and 102 other enslaved people perished.[20] Crowther's new home would be Freetown,

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[17] Ted Olsen, "Bishop before his time," *Christian History* 22, no 3 (2003): 10-15.

[18] Jesse Page, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther: The slave boy who became Bishop of the Ni*ger (London, UK: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1892), 25.

[19] Jesse Page, *The Black Bishop: Samuel Adjai Crowther* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 10.

[20] Page, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther*, 30.

where they transferred them, and soon he became a Christian. He was baptized on December 11, 1825, by the Rev. J. Raben, taking the name of Samuel Crowther.[21]

*The Christian Faith Pioneer in Nigeria*

Before the advent of Christianity in Nigerian and in most parts of Africa, indigenes were traditional worshippers who were believers in the African traditional religious system and those who were adherents to the Islamic religion. Nigerians are not in want of superstitions to believe in, for which Page observed that "in one respect, at least, the superstitious fear of the poor African is well founded, for upon his country has settled an evil spirit in verity and truth, and that demon is called slavery."[22] Between 1450-1930, slave trade thrived and succeeded in West Africa when captors had substantial resources and incentives to do so. The significant demand for captive labor was brought by the ability of a monarchy to extract servile labor and by the demand for slave-produced goods or through purchasers who would carry captives a distance to where these conditions are present.[23]

The journey of the Christian faith in Nigeria, especially among the Yorubas and among other ethnic groups, oscillates around the life and ministry of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a highly esteemed Church leader from Western Nigeria. Crowther was

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[21] Page, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther*, 32.

[22] Page, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther*, 18.

[23] Patrick Manning, "Slavery and Slave Trade in West Africa, 1450-1930," The History of African Development, https://www.aehnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Manning.Slavery-and-Slave-Trade-in-West-Africa-1450-1930.pdf.

of Yoruba descent, born in Osogun, Iseyin Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria.[24] Earlier, the Augustinian and Capuchin monks from Portugal had, during the 15th century, attempted to establish the Church in Nigeria, where her people predominantly were practitioners of African traditional religion and Islam. Historians agree that establishing the church was unsuccessful, especially around the Benin and Warri kingdoms. Galadima and Turaki reported that the formerly enslaved people in the Americas and Great Britain became the pioneers of building the Christian mission on the west coast of Africa, particularly in Yoruba land, the Niger, and Cross River and Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther was one of such formerly enslaved people.[25] The following are pioneering Christian missions in Nigeria: The Wesleyan Methodist in 1842; Scottish Presbyterian in 1842; Church Missionary Society in 1844; Southern Baptist Foreign Mission in 1850; Roman Catholic Mission in 1861; Qua Iboe Mission in 1887; Sudan Interior Mission in 1893; Sudan United Mission in 1904; United Missionary Society in 1905; Seventh Day Adventist in 1914; Assembly of God in 1939; and African Church Movements in 1888-1925.[26] Crowthers' way with people of different culture is a lesson to be grasped by believers everywhere and particularly in SHOW; he did not see differences in culture as something to deter him from relationship with others.

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[24] Olusegun Martins, "Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1807-1891): The Root, Faith, Mission & Legacy," Paper Presented at The Nigerian Council of Elders Annual Independence Lecture Held on October 8, 2011, at Rhode Island State House in Providence, Rhode, Island.

[25] Bulus Y. Galadima and Yusufu Turaki, "Christianity in Nigeria – Part 1," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* (200l): 85-101.

[26] Entries culled from Bulus Y. Galadima and Yusufu Turaki, "Christianity in Nigeria – Part 1," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* (200l): 85-101; and Bulus Y. Galadima and Yusufu Turaki, "Christianity in Nigeria – Part 2," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* (200l): 177-207.

*Clergyman and Missionary*

After Crowther's conversion, his interest and aptitude for learning were so high that in less time, he started reading. After a while, on the recommendation of one Rev. James Frederick Schön, with whom Crowther had had their first Missionary expedition to the Niger, he visited England on September 3, 1842, to study in Highbury Missionary College, Islington, and on Sunday, June 11, 1843, from the hands of the Bishop of London, Dr. Blomfield. Crowther received the rite of ordination.[27] Upon returning to Africa, Crowther and Henry Townsend arrived in Abeokuta, Nigeria, to open a mission as part of his missionary assignment, where he would experience something that he would never have imagined. In this mission assignment to Abeokuta, he met his mother and siblings on August 21, 1846, which was about twenty-five years after he was captured; no doubt they were all bewildered. The emotions shared on this chance meeting was overwhelming an yet a family reunion similar to the Genesis 46:28–30 (NIV) narrative of Jacob meeting yet again his "lost" son:

> Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time. Israel said to Joseph, 'Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive.'

[27] Jesse Page, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther: The slave boy who became Bishop of the Niger* (London, UK: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1892), 64. Rev. James Frederick Schön served as a missionary in Sierra Leone and was resourceful among the African people. His return from this trip to Sierra Leone on December 2, 1843, was remarkable as he preached his first sermon in English to the crowded assembly of native Christians on Sunday, December 3, 1843.

Samuel Crowther's mother and sibling became the "first fruit" of his mission, and his mother had to be christened as Hannah,[28] noting that after baptism, her son had earlier been named Samuel. Samuel Ajayi Crowther was married to Asano Susan Thomson, who, like Crowther, was a liberated slave of Yoruba parentage who was also taken to Sierra Leone. They were blessed with five children: Josiah, Samuel, Mrs. Macaulay (mother of Herbert Macaulay, one of Nigeria's foremost nationalists and politicians), Mrs. Thomson, and Dandeson, the youngest among them.

After years of ministering, Crowther wrote on August 3, 1849,

> This Mission is today three years old. What hath God wrought in this short interval of conflict between light and darkness! We have 500 constant attendants on the means of grace, about eighty communicants, and nearly 200 candidates for baptism. Others have cast their gods away and are not far from enlisting under the banner of Christ.[29]

The Lord made Crowther's sacrifice and labor, causing his work to be blessed. Samuel Crowther was consecrated at the Canterbury Cathedral as the first Bishop of the Niger on St. Peter's Day, 1864, in an epoch-making event graced by the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and all other dignitaries marking the most important event of Crowther's time in ministry.[30]

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[28] Hannah, Samuel's mother's joy would have known no bounds, as words could never explain. It is a cultural belief that parents should be buried by their children at their demise, so seeing a 'lost and found' son return home after 25 years was very tangile.

[29] Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society, its Environment, its Men and its Work, vol. 2* (London, UK: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 104.

[30] Page, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther*, 118; 1864 Saint Peter's Day was on Wednesday, June 29. St. Peter's Day could also be observed on the Sunday after the Day it falls on. The following were other leaders with whom Crowther worked or associated during his ministry; Bishop John Wills Weeks (1799-1857), Bishop of Sierra Leone. Mr. Henry Townsend (1815-1886), Missionary to Sierra Leone and one of the founders of the Yoruba mission, and Rev. Henry Venn (1796-1873), an Anglican clergyman and mission strategist.

*Translator and Linguist*

Crowther's giftedness is unparalleled. He had a high aptitude for languages as he studied Latin and Greek. He was the principal agent in translating the Bible into the Yoruba tongue. He was an astute fellow who also went on to compile for publication a grammar and vocabulary of the Yoruba tongue, the first of its kind. This became the greatest tool that served in spreading the Gospel among his tribesmen and country.[31] Crowther's literary prowess was unmatched as he further translated a Prayer Book and wrote the first *Yoruba Dictionary*. He would later add his book of vocabulary for the Yoruba language which he painstakingly prepared. There are records of several other translation efforts outside of his native tongue.

His biographer, Jesse Page, records that after the Niger Expeditions of 1854 and 1857, Crowther, with the help of an interpreter, wrote a book in Igbo; this was after the unsuccessful attempt of the 1841 Niger expedition, during which he and James Schön both ventured after learning to communicate in Hausa. He also had publications in other languages, including Nupe. A unique trait of Bishop Crowther was his intellect and quest for learning; this passion led him to a Doctor of Divinity degree. Samuel Ajayi Crowther was recommended and called to England for ordination in 1842.[32] Crowther's effort at

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[31] Page, *Samuel Ajayi Crowther*, 64.

[32] Olusegun Martins, "Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1807-1891): The Root, Faith, Mission & Legacy," Paper Presented at The Nigerian Council of Elders Annual Independence Lecture Held on October 8, 2011, at Rhode Island State House in Providence, Rhode Island; During this journey, he gave himself to working on the grammar and vocabulary of the Yoruba tongues for the work of translations. While in England, he began and finished his first published literary work, Yoruba Vocabulary, in 1843, and a Yoruba version of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer followed later. He also began codifying other languages. Following the British Niger Expeditions of 1854 and 1857, Crowther produced a primer for the Igbo language in 1857, another for the Nupe language in 1860, and a complete grammar and vocabulary of Nupe in 1864. However, he continued supervising the translation of the Yoruba Bible (Bibeli Mimọ), completed in the mid-1880s, a few years before his death.

writing and expressing himself in Nigeria's three major languages distinguished him as a true Nigerian and the real WAZOBIA[33] ambassador.

*The Nationalist*

Victor Olugbenga Fawole, in his work on Nigeria's national anthem, presented the charge,

> I must obey the call to put in my best efforts to make this country a better place to live. I must harness all my potential and uphold my integrity to stand as a good example for others. My life must be made a template for the coming generations to emulate. I must make an impact. I must leave my footprints on the sands of time.[34]

Fawole was practically re-echoing Crowther's loyalty and devotion to the country of his birth, where he was abducted and sold as a slave trophy. Crowther refused to allow himself to wallow in the hurt and pain of his enslavement; he created a template for national unity, leaving a legacy yet to be matched by any other. He reflected deep love and passion for the nation and his compatriots, making him a nationalist not in the hue of opposing the interest and culture of other nations; after all, he was a loyal Sierra Leonian because of his affinity to the land from where he was liberated. In today's world, his

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[33] Victor Olugbenga WAZOBIA is a Nigerian coinage that in the colloquial language representative of the three major languages spoken. This is the mesh word used to identify the unity of the Nigerian people. It is the expression word interpretation for 'come'. As 'Wa' is Yoruba, 'Zo' is Hausa, and Bia is Igbo.

[34] Fawole, "Arise O' Compatriots: Let's Talk about the National Anthem – Analyses and Commentary." https://www.academia.edu/14919458/ARISE_O_COMPATRIOTS.

At the time that this historical foundation paper was written, Nigeria's national anthem was "Arise, O Compatriots" which was adopted since 1978, but the incumbent president Bola Tinubu signed a bill that brought back the old national anthem; "Nigeria, We Hail Thee" on 29 May 2024 a day that marks the nations democracy day.

veritable work of nation-building would have gained him a nomination for the prestigious Nobel Prize in the peace category. He was a unifier who bore no grudge, not even to the part of the country whose people had sold him out to slavery.

Crowther was a nation builder; his vocation as a clergyman, missionary, translator, and linguist was the thread with which he weaved "One Nigeria," the cliché that supposedly invokes national camaraderie among Nigerians. There was no bitterness in Samuel. Notwithstanding the remembering of the ordeal of his enslavement nor on re-entry back to Nigeria, he was passionately traversing the nation, depicting no hate nor segregation. He worked hard at disseminating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every people group and to every religious inclination.

Crowther was a member of the first Royal Niger expedition that sailed on April 14, 1841. Although they did not get to the mouth of the Niger until August 20. The mission was deemed a failure because of the deadly fever that struck the crew. Stock reported that forty-two of the one hundred fifty white men died in two months, whereas many others were left in shattered health.[35]

Crowther was resolute about a comeback to this region; he founded the Niger Mission in 1857 amidst difficulties which included being shipwrecked, causing him to be stranded for months; maximizing this crisis, he undertook to study the Nupe language leading to reaching the Nupe and Hausa [Fulani] people.[36] Wall asserts that Crowther's Niger Mission was the initial missionary engagement with African Islam in modern

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[35] Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society, its Environment, its Men and its Work*, vol. 1 (London, UK: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 455.

[36] Andrew F. Walls, "The Legacy of Samuel Ajayi Crowther," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16, no 1 (1992): 15-21; The Hausa [Fulani] tribe is predominantly Muslim, occupying the northern region of Nigeria.

times. He proceeded to his Niger Delta pastorate in 1891. Generally, the mission thrived with Onitsha as headquarters. The Delta Pastorate had an independent African Church for Bonny; in all, Crowther's ministry to these diverse arrays of people and regions of the country were hallmarks of his humility, sense of service, and unity of purpose.

*A Nationalist Before the Clarion Call*

As introduced earlier, the national anthem is a clarion call set at achieving the goal and objective of unity of purpose among Nigerians. Bishop Crowther heeded the clarion call to "Arise" as a compatriot; not only did he arise, but he also fought and lived the supposed ideals of a "nation bound in freedom, peace, and unity." He chatted the roadmap to the building of "a nation where peace and justice" should reign. He undoubtedly lived "to defend her unity and uphold her honor and glory." Crowther aptly left "footprints on the sands of time," making alive the phrase made famous by his contemporary, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who, in the poem "A Psalm of Life" composed in 1839, described the achievement, the mark, and the legacy that great men leave on history.

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC),[37] was a government scheme designed to "primarily inculcate in Nigerian Youths the spirit of selfless service to the community, and to emphasize the spirit of unity and brotherhood of all Nigerians, irrespective of

[37] The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) program has been hinted at in the Spiritual Autobiographies paper. The program is made mandatory for every Nigerian who completes their undergraduate degree courses; few are granted exceptions on health grounds or if the graduate has exceeded age thirty, which is the required 'cut-off' birthday.

cultural or social background."[38] This program has played a significant role in integrating Nigeria as young graduates have been made to crisscross the nation on this national assignment. All the essence of the NYSC and corresponding efforts by the government at ensuring that there is unity, cohesion, and peace among nationals, includes efforts by The National Orientation Agency (N.O.A.),[39] an agency of government designed and set at unifying the nation. Bishop Crowther, through his work, exemplified unity and a sense of patriotism long before the efforts by the government were initiated. He was a pacesetter in initiating peace, unity, and national harmony. There is irony in recalling that his capture was by the hands of Fulani and Oyo Muslims, the people group he eventually worked tirelessly to minister to during his work as clergy and missionary.

*The Bishop Samuel Crowther Legacy and the Unity of the Church*

Bishop Crowther's life is exemplary of a true leader, one who is selfless, who loves his people, and was interested in raising their cause from where he met them. He was a bridge-builder who built the bond of unity not only among the Yoruba people but also among people from different ethnicity and cultures. The way and manner with which he weaved through these diverse cultures and people group is a lesson that could be applied in the church, especially one that is multiethnic and multicultural. SHOW stands

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[38] National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), "About Scheme," www.nysc.gov.ng. The NYSC scheme was established by Decree No. 24 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; the same has now been repealed and replaced by Decree 51 of June 16, 1993.

[39] National Orientation Agency (N.O.A.), "The Major Voice of National Orientation Agency," https://www.noa.gov.ng/. According to information on her website, the National Orientation Agency was established by Decree 100 of 1993: "To consistently raise awareness, positively change attitudes, values, and behaviors; accurately and adequately inform; and sufficiently mobilize citizens to act in ways that promote peace, and harmony. To develop an orderly, responsible, and disciplined Nigerian society, where citizens demonstrate core values of honesty, hard work, and patriotism."

to learn the lessons of a deliberate effort at fostering unity as it relates to the fellowship of the brethren who are not from the same culture; not only did he push beyond the cultural walls of divide, but he also pushed so much that he forgave and overlook those who hurt him, those who withstood him, and those who sold him as a slave. His example reflects the life of Joseph who forgave his siblings and extended helped to them when they mostly needed help (Genesis 37–50).

Crowther understood the major problems of Nigeria to be that of religion, cultural differences, and tribalism. Endowed with wisdom, he addressed these issues in ways unique; this enabled him to confront the two major ills that bedeviled the Nigerian people. Majority of the bloodshed and destruction in the nation has been tied to religious intolerance between the two major religions: Christianity and Islam in the land. Andrew Walls observed that Crowther, though no great scholar or Arabist, developed an approach to Islam which reflected his patience and readiness to engage believers of this faith, becoming a hallmark of his missionary method.[40]

Tribalism was the feeling of likeness and attachment to people of one's own tribe and ethnicity. Tribalism is a major challenge to the patriotism of Nigerians with more than 250 different ethnic groups, leading to untold number of conflicts and violent clashes.[41]A New York Times archived report observed that tribal groups in Nigeria could number in millions of people outnumbering certain European nations.[42] According to

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[40] Walls, "The Legacy of Samuel Ajayi Crowther," 15-21.

[41] Chekwube Uyanwune, "Tribalism in Nigeria: A Call for Unity and Understanding," Apr 28, 2023, https://chekwubeuyanwune.medium.com/tribalism-in-nigeria-a-call-for-unity-and-understanding-a6d45760e7a5.

[42] New York Times, "An African Chief Explains Tribalism," March 1, 1964, https://www.nytimes.com/1964/03/01/archives/an-african-chief-explains-tribalism.html.

Chekwube Uyanwune, tribalism has created "us versus them" mentality among Nigerians breeding distrust, suspicion, and many violent actions. Crowther exerted much effort to learn the languages of different tribes; he is credited to have written the first book on Igbo language; he had publications in other languages and was actively learning other languages and the custom of other tribes.

Crowthers approach to religion and tribalism in Nigeria particularly is worthy of emulation to build the church communities of today. One of the latest legacies in honor of Bishop Crowther is The Ajayi Crowther University[43] in Oyo Town, Oyo State in Nigeria, which was granted license by the Nigerian government on 7 January 2005. This University was established by The Supra Diocesan Board (West) of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) as a coalition between the Church Missionary Society training institution, Abeokuta and the defunct St. Andrews College, Oyo.

## Conclusion

The Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther could be said to have lived beyond his time; he heeded the clarion call in the national anthem: "Arise, O Compatriots, Nigeria's call obey. To serve our fatherland, With love and strength and faith," long before the country itself emerged and before the birth of the composer.

Historian Dike presented the assessment of Crowther's character and contribution by The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.):

> In the annals of evangelization of West Africa, no name stands higher than his. A boy picked out of heathenism and slavery, with no background and no inheritance save generations of crudest paganism. However, he became a man whose

[43] Ajayi Crowther University, "Historical Background," https://www.acu.edu.ng/historical-background/.

> Christian character was an example to everyone, a scholar capable of translating work of high merit, the founder of a great pioneer mission, and the organizer of a large African Church. Pages' words on Crowther reverberate; 'Where is the parallel to such a life?' As to Crowther's legacy, Martins avowed that he was 'an ecclesiastical hero' whose place should be so regarded in the annals of the post-reformation history of the Church, especially with a balanced inclusion belonging to the era of African church history.[44]

As it is appointed to all men "to die," Crowther lived and made complete the grace bestowed on him by his Savior and Lord. Wall opined that "Crowther, though no great scholar or Arabist, developed an approach to Islam in its African setting, which reflected the patience and the readiness to listen that marked his entire missionary method."[45]

Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther leaves a legacy and inspiration for the entire church, leaders, and non-leaders, instilling the need to complete our God-given assignment of ensuring that we live in harmony and unity among ourselves as fellow believers and with others in our community regardless of circumstances, differences, background, hurts, and offenses. This chapter presents a historical foundation for developing a ministry model that will help promote unity in local churches. The aspiration for members of SHOW both present and future to lead Christian lives as delineated in scripture and by the historical account of Samuel Crowther will be desirable, as he was an individual who modeled what unity should be by his work with people of different cultural background. The next chapter lays the theological framework for this study.

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[44] Olusegun Martins, "Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther (1807-1891): The Root, Faith, Mission & Legacy," Paper Presented at The Nigerian Council of Elders Annual Independence Lecture Held on October 8, 2011, at Rhode Island State House in Providence, Rhode Island.

[45] Andrew F. Walls, "*The Legacy of Samuel Ajayi Crowther*," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 16, no 1 (1992): 15-21.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

## Introduction

This chapter presents two theological themes trinitarian theology and practical theology, as the theological bedrock for the study that aimed to develop a ministry model that promotes unity at Shekina House of Worship (SHOW), a multicultural church. The approach will include a brief historical background of these theological themes, a hint on some contemporary scholarship, the support of Scripture, congregational unity, and the multicultural dynamics of the themes.

It is the aim of this study not only to advocate the need for unity in the multicultural church setting but to also anticipate that congregational unity among members will foster membership growth. Michael Crane opine that the Great Commission is a task to know our world which is changing by the twin forces of globalization and urbanization as factors to the rapid change occurring for which we must adapt our ministries and maximize our ability to be ministers of the gospel,[1] ministering to the whole world as a testimony to all nations (Matthew 24:14). It should be worthy of note that the nations are already at our doorstep for which the need for multicultural, multiethnic congregations is higher today that ever in the history of man as the diversity

[1] Michael Crane, "Multicultural Churches in Global Cities," in *The International Pastor Experience*, ed. David L. Packer (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015), 121-35.

in our different ethnic and cultural composition is unprecedented. The Pew Research Center observed that the U.S. foreign-born population reached a record 44.8 million in 2018, with more than a million immigrants arriving each year.[2] The Centre claims that America has more international migrants than any other country, with about 51 million migrants in the year 2020. America leads the pack of the nations of the world on this measure by a wide margin, whereas Germany and Saudi Arabia are the next-largest countries with populations of about 15.8 million and 13.5 million migrants respectively.[3] This chapter will mirror how the theological themes of trinitarian theology and practical theology both influence the study on promoting unity in a multicultural church setting.

## Overview

The context of the project is Shekina House of Worship in Queens, New York. SHOW is a multicultural church. The study proposes to develop a ministry model that promotes unity in a multicultural church setting. This dissertation aims to address challenges of interrelationship among members of the church. The multiethnic, multiracial, and multicultural outlook of the church has a potential of causing growth patterns better than it is currently experiencing.

The research hypothesis is that if members of the context participated in the training from the ministry model to be developed for unity in the congregation, it will

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[2] Abby Budiman, "Key findings about U.S. immigrants," 20 August 2020, https://www.pew research.org/short-reads/2020/08/20/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/.

[3] Anusha Natarajan, Mohamad Moslimani, Mark Hugo Lopez, and Pew Research Center, "Key facts about recent trends in global migration," 16 December 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/12/16/key-facts-about-recent-trends-in-global-migration/.

promote growth, because they will be provided with tools to advance the various ministries of the church.

The anticipated outcome of the research project conducted speculates that, if the leaders and members of the congregation implements the study, there would be a steady increase of membership growth numbers of the multicultural congregation primarily because unity would have been fostered. Ken L. Davis opined that multicultural churches are microcosms that simultaneously reflect a fulfillment of God's Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) and foreshadow the reality of His heaven (Rev 5:9–10; 7:9–10; 14:6–7; 15:4; 21:3).[4] The diversity of nationalities present in the church space is a pointer to the "heartbeat" of God, the harvest of people from every nation. "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many" (1 Cor 12:13–14).

## Theological Themes

Theology is the study of God. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, a renown American professor of Reformed theology, is known to have advanced a definition for theology as, "the science of God and his relationship to man and the world." Theological themes are of universal dimensions and so not restricted, encompassing the doctrine of

[4] Ken L. Davis, "Multicultural Church Planting Models." Paper Submitted to Dr. David J. Hesselgrave, Ph. D. for the Course; Planting Churches in North America and Overseas at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Chicago, November 2001, http://churchplant.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Multicultural-Church-Planting-Models.pdf.

God, of humanity, and of the world.[5] And so, the need to connect our experiences, actions, and activities to theological themes will serve as a compass. According to Thielicke and Louth, "theology is a spiritual or religious attempt of 'believers' to explicate their faith."[6] Hence, the believer is equipped to minister God's grace to the outside world from deep personal convictions.

*Trinitarian Theology*

Trinitarian theology is a term that will be used interchangeably with either "trinitarian doctrine," "theology of the Trinity," or the "doctrine of the Trinity." This hinges on the unity of the Godhead. The Triune nature of the Holy Trinity is aimed at helping achieve the goals of this research study.

Trinitarian theology is "relating to the Trinity and the Christian view that God is one God in three Persons."[7] The doctrine of the Trinity is "the Christian church's belief that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three Persons in one Godhead. They share the same essence and substance, yet they are three "persons." God is by this way known within the Godhead that is also known in Christian experience.[8]

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[5] Helmut Thielicke and Andrew Louth, "Theology," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 12, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/theology.

[6] Thielicke and Louth, *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

[7] Donald K. McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 287.

[8] McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 288.

*Practical Theology*

Practical theology is the study of theology in a way that is intended to make it useful or applicable, howbeit making it relevant to everyday concerns.[9] Our theology is incomplete until it is practical and applied. The School of Theology at The Center for Practical Theology in Boston University on her website describes practical theology as:

> the mutually strengthening relationship between the theological learning and research of a university-based seminary, and the actual experience and needs of Christian communities. It embraces a dynamic vision of the web of ecclesiastical, academic, and social institutions that together sustain excellent pastoral leaders and healthy, vibrant Christian communities.[10]

From the above definition, four factors were identified which would help the deployment of any practical endeavor: an actual experience, the needs of the communities, credible leaders, and lastly, healthy Christian communities which all underpins theological convictions to be practical.

## Historical Background of Theological Themes

*Trinitarian Theology*

Trinitarian theology presents that God is one in essence, but complementary and tripartite in roles and personhood. Matthew 28:19 bears reference to the "Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," confirming that one must always hold firm to the Trinity.[11]

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[9] Vision Bible College, What Is Practical Theology?, https://visionbiblecollege.edu.au/overview/theology/.

[10] Boston University, What is Practical Theology?, https://www.bu.edu/cpt/about/the-center-for-practical-theology/.

[11] Franz Dünzl, *A Brief History of The Doctrine of The Trinity in The Early Church*, trans. John Bowden (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2007), 92.

The Nicene Creed, a statement of faith that endorsed the doctrine of the Trinity, was the product of the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD which was convened by Emperor Constantine with the intent to address conflicting teachings from the likes of Arius. The First Council of Constantinople (381 AD) was a revision of the Council in Nicaea. However, the initial teachings of the doctrine of the trinity were by Tertullian, (c. 210)[12] who is mostly not credited. Tertullian was the first to use the word "trinity" among others in his Latin writings.[13]

The Cappadocian Fathers – Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335–ca. 395), Basil of Caesarea (ca. 329–79, Gregory of Nyssa older brother) and Gregory Nazianzus (329–89) – were bishops who were credited with the establishment of consistent terminology for the Trinity.[14] Augustine is said to have argued that the Bible implicitly teaches about trinitarianism and that the rest of it is an extended meditation of the same, reasoning that the reflections, images, or indications of the Trinity could be seen in the created realm even if not intellectually.[15] Hillar cites Benjamin Warfield who had quoted Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), a preeminent German theologian, as saying:

> When the Nicene formulary is praised, it is always of Athanasius that we think; when the Chalcedonian decree is cited, it is the name of Leo the Great that is magnified. But that Tertullian is in reality the father of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and of the Person of Christ, and that in the whole patristic literature there is no treatise that can be compared in

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[12] David K. Bernard, *A History of Christian Doctrine: The Post-Apostolic Age to the Middle Ages, A.D.100-1500* (Hazelwood, NJ: Word Aflame Press, 1995), 62.

[13] Marian Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity: The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 190–220.

[14] Dale Tuggy, "Trinity," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Winter 2021 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/trinity/>.

[15] Tuggy, "Trinity," 2021.

> importance and influence with the tract 'Against Praxeas' it has necessarily been left to the investigation of our own day to exhibit.[16]

Although the adoption and acceptance of the term "trinity," not a Bible coinage, but its symbolism and justification are clear. Franz Dünzl opined that "God can use the (limited) power of our thought and feelings, our (incomplete) striving for knowledge, our creativity and even our delight in disputation to disclose himself in the garb of human thoughts and words."[17] Therefore, the concept of the trinity brought about a measure of tranquility to the gaps of the teachings of the likes of Origen, Arius, and Eusebius at that time. The confession of the triune God, which was forged in a binding form at the first ecumenical councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381)[18] is a historical landmark theologically speaking. Dünzl advanced that holding "both the unity and trinity of God together was the aim of the Neo-Nicene doctrine of the Trinity and will remain the goal of any Christian theology if it wants to do justice to the claim made by its own tradition and especially by the early Christian councils."[19]

The word trinity, although not found in the Bible, is an idea represented by the word that is taught in many places. The word trinity means "tri-unity" or "three-in-oneness." It is used to summarize the teaching of Scripture that God is three persons yet one God.[20] The Blessed Holy Trinity is the three-person membership of the Godhead.

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[16] Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970), quoted in Marian Hillar, *From Logos to Trinity: The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 190–191.

[17] Dünzl, *A Brief History of The Doctrine of The Trinity in The Early Church*, xi.

[18] Dünzl, *A Brief History of The Doctrine of The Trinity in The Early Church*, ix.

[19] Dünzl, *A Brief History of The Doctrine of The Trinity in The Early Church*, 137.

[20] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 2nd ed., eCopy (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 242.

God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is a unity of three co-eternal persons. The Trinity is well expressed and implied in the Bible as can be seen in scriptures. Scriptures make valid the tripartite nature of God, when the scripture gave the account of creation as seen in (Genesis 1:1, 26), "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. … Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'" There is seen the presence and the use of the plural "us" and "our." The plurality seen above is expressed in Matthew 3:16–17, where God the son, Jesus Christ, is mentioned. God the Holy Spirit is mentioned as represented by the "Dove" and God the Father here is referenced as making the statement, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Luke 1:35 also captures a reference to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As seen in Matthew 3:16, also in Luke 3:22, the Father is heard speaking from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased," whereas Jesus Christ is being baptized, and the Holy Ghost is seen to be descending in a bodily shape again like a dove. In John 14:16–17, Jesus is praying to the Father about the Comforter — The Holy Spirit. So, here we see the trinity present. Colossians 2:9 is a scripture where the trinity is also affirmed; "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." 1 John 5:7–8 also bears credence to the thought of the Trinity. The quoted scriptures above register the presence of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ. Luke 1:35 captures a reference to Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Also, Luke 21–22, John 14:16–17, Col 2:9, 1 Peter 1:2, and 1 John 5:7–8 all validates the doctrine of the Trinity.

*Practical Theology*

According to Wilhelm Gräb, Schleiermacher is the founding father of practical theology,[21] which is one of the disciplines of theological studies. In the work of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Scheiermacher (1768-1834), titled; *Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums*[22] and translated as the *Brief Outline of Theology as a Field of Study*, Gräb opined that Schleiermacher's view was that theology lives from its subject matter and that its content is given in the praxis of human existence and daily, that the said "content" is the religion of Christianity. He advanced that it stretched, the entire history of Christianity till date, in Christian communities, the church, and her leadership, these components are in tandem with the factors identified from the assertion from Boston University. Gräb also revealed that Schleiermacher's contemporary and colleague, Gottlieb Jakob Planck (1751-1833), in his writing about practical theology, argued that it was a subordinate field within studies of theology proper and, strictly speaking, did not really belong to theology; so, classifying it is as applied theology, "theologia applicata."[23]

On another hand, Gerben Heitink characterizes practical theology as the science of the interpretation of the action of the church, further presenting it as "the empirically orientated theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society."[24] Pieterse sees practical theology as "the critical theory of gospel-

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[21] Wilhelm Gräb, "Practical Theology as Theology of Religion: Schleiermacher's Understanding of Practical Theology as a Discipline," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 9, no. 2 (2005): 181–196.

[22] The first edition was published in 1811, and the second edition was published in 1830.

[23] Gräb, "Practical Theology as Theology of Religion," 2005.

[24] Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domains: Manual for Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 102.

orientated communicative acts" which have the specific aim of "bringing about and maintaining a reciprocal relationship between God and human beings through the ministry."[25] Pieterse presented that practical theology is more like an applied form of theology. It does not only concern itself with understanding theological doctrines but also focuses on how to apply these doctrines to real everyday life challenges.[26] It will be proper to assert that practical theology cannot be separated from religious practice; they must be sought and found together because together they form a common context.[27]

Practical theology is the "critical reflection on the church's life in both corporate and individual expressions. Often included are disciplines such as Christian education, homiletics, liturgics, and pastoral care. More broadly, it relates to sanctification and living the Christian life. It has also been called practical divinity."[28]

Osmer premised the basic structures of practical theological interpretation into four domains[29] as: the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretive task, the normative task, and the pragmatic task. To which he raised the following respective questions with respect to doing ministry: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond? In Kevin Smith's review of Osmer's *Practical*

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[25] Hendrik J. C. Pieterse, "A dialogical theory of communication from a practical theological perspective," *Evangelical Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1990): 223-240.

[26] Cassius L. Barclay, "The Development of a Training Model that Promotes Unity Among Multiple Generations in the Local Church," DMin diss., United Theological Seminary, 2023, 78.

[27] Birgit Weyel, "Practical Theology and Religion," in *International Handbook of Practical Theology*, ed. Birgit Weyel, Wilhelm Gräb, Emmanuel Lartey, and Cas Wepener (Berland, Germany: De Gruyter, 2022), 219, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110618150-017.

[28] McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 215.

[29] Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 4.

*Theology*, he added the dimension of function[30] to the task domain identified by Osmer.

Figure 1: The four tasks of practical theology.

| Task | Descriptive | Interpretive | Normative | Strategic |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Question | What is going on? | Why is it going on? | What ought to be going on? | How might we respond? |
| Function | Priestly listening | Sagely wisdom | Prophetic discernment | Servant leadership |

Smith is attempting to communicate "the how" of practical theology in that the leader listens, makes useful evaluations, mobilizes with available resources, and strategically executes the assignment.

Heyns and Pieterse sums up that "Practical theology is the branch of theology that considers those actions designed to ensure that God's word reaches people and is embodied in their lives."[31] They further posit that practical theology should emphasize religious actions and activities that reveals the coming God man.[32]

## Contemporary Scholarship of Theology Themes

### *Contemporary Scholarship of Trinitarian Theology*

Contemporary scholarship of Trinitarian is not exhaustive in this chapter, but some of the theologians of this period include Catherine LaCugna, Douglas F. Ottati,

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[30] Kevin G. Smith, "Review of Richard Osmer, Practical Theology: An Introduction," *Conspectus: The Journal of the South African Theological Seminary* 10, no. 1 (2010), https://sats.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Smith_ReviewOsmer.pdf.

[31] Louis Michiel Heyns and Hendrik J. C. Pieterse, *A Primer in Practical Theology* (Pretoria, South Africa: Gnosis Books, 1990), 1.

[32] Heyns and Pieterse, *A Primer in Practical Theology*, 10.

Robert J. Sherman, Alan J. Torrance and other. Wisse argued in-depth about Augustine's view of the Trinity, reminding that he rejects, the notion in which God is construed along the lines of the relationship between the absolute and the world.[33] Barnes explains a contemporary Trinitarian theology from Augustine's lens that will account for the following: the reductive use of primary sources, a retreat from the polemical genre, also an emphasis on the philosophical content of the doctrine.[34] But for Venter, he directs his inquiries to what he presumes the twentieth century will interrogate as to the scholarship of the Trinity. He recognized the following major areas: the return to sources, the clarification of the function of the confession and its re-envisioning of the nature of divinity, the more centering of the Christian vision in one material principle, the heuristic potential for practical questions, and the need for apophatism.[35]

*Contemporary Scholarship of Practical Theology*

Ward mentioned that in the 1950s, Seward Hiltner, who was one of the key figures in the contemporary development of practical theology in the United States, talked about a "pastoral perspective" in theology implying there was a way of seeing that came from pastoral practice.[36]

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[33] Maarten Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology beyond Participation: Augustines De Trinitate and Contemporary Theology* (London, UK: T & T Clark International, eBook (2011), 50-107.

[34] Michel René Barnes, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 237-250.

[35] Rian Venter, "Taking stock of the Trinitarian renaissance: What have we learned?," (*HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2019): 75, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i1.5407.

[36] Pete Ward, *Introducing practical theology: mission, ministry, and the life of the church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 9.

Other contemporary practical theologians will include Anthony Oakley Dyson, Alastair Vincent Campbell, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, Don S. Browning, Elaine L. Graham, Eric Stoddart, Geoffrey Wainwright, Pete Ward, Seward Hiltner, and others. Pete Ward mentioned Bonnie Miller-McLemore who had identified four uses of the term practical theology. Bonnie Miller-McLemore holds that it is an "academic discipline among scholars," an "activity of faith undertaken by believers," a "method for thinking" and a "subject area in a curriculum." It presents as the activity in the church in which believers "sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday," and the channel of understanding theology in practice.[37] Pete Ward sees practical theology as the "practice of the church," from practice and experience and then moving toward theological formulation.[38]

## Scriptural Support for Theological Themes

Heyns and Pieterse opined that "Scripture is always understood in terms of some experience. Experience plays a part even when we are not aware of it. If experience is not examined scientifically, our knowledge of praxis is pre-scientific and therefore less realistic."[39] The following scriptures justify the practicability of our faith: James 2:14–17; James 1:22–25; 1 John 3:18; Matthew 7:12; 19:19; and Luke 6:31. The shape of trinitarian doctrine is dictated by the pattern of redemption; everything comes from God, is made known and redeemed through Jesus Christ, and is consummated by the power of

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[37] Ward, *Introducing practical theology: mission, ministry, and the life of the church*, 11.

[38] Ward, *Introducing practical theology: mission, ministry, and the life of the church*, 4.

[39] Heyns and Pieterse, *A Primer in Practical Theology*, 41.

the Holy Spirit.[40] Although, trinitarian doctrine is not explicitly taught in the Old Testament, neither does the New Testament contains explicit trinitarian doctrine; many Christian theologians, apologists, and philosophers hold that the doctrine can be inferred from what the New Testament does teach about God.[41]

The Trinity is equal in essence and also participate in functional subordination to carry out the plans of God. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are personalities in the Godhead.

> Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Father which constitutes him the Father and not the Son; there is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father; and there is that in the Holy Spirit which constitutes Him the Holy Spirit and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter, the Son is the Begotten, and the Holy Spirit is the one proceeding from the Father and the Son. Because these three persons in the Godhead are in a state of unity, there is but one Lord God Almighty and His name one.[42]

The following scriptures show the Son functionally subordinates to the Father and the Holy Spirit. John 5:17–30; 10:29; Matthew 26:36–44; Philippian 2:5–11; Luke 11:15–21; Mark 13:32; and John 16:12–13. The Father also subordinates to the Son and the Spirit: John 5:22–23; Hebrew 1:6; Ephesians 1:11–14, Colossians 2:9; and Philippian 2:9–12. The Spirit subordinates to Father and the Son: John 14:26; 15:26; and 16:13–16.

Modalism and Tri-Theism does not support the trinitarian nature of God. Modalism is the theological doctrine that the Father, Son, and Spirit are not three distinct Persons, but rather three modes or forms of activity under which God manifests Himself.

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[40] Catherine M. LaCugna, "The Practical Trinity," *The Christian Century* (1992): 678-682.

[41] Tuggy, "Trinity," 2021.

[42] Assemblies of God, "16 fundamental truths," https://ag.org/beliefs/statement-of-fundamental-truths#2.

A modalist is an adherent of the theological doctrine of modalism.[43] The modalistic view of the Trinity holds that they are not equal and that they are also not eternally co-existent. The modalistic views the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as distinct entities such that their activities are merely three successive manifestations of God, or three temporary modes of His activity. Modalism, which is a form of unitarianism, denies that God in His own inner being is triune.

Tritheism, on the other hand, is the belief in three Gods, especially in the doctrine that the three Persons of the Trinity are three distinct Gods. According to tritheism, the Father, Son, and Spirit are three separate Gods. Even today, some say that the Father is one God, that the Son is one God, and that the Spirit is also one God. This is tritheism. Whenever the distinctions of the Persons of the Godhead are pressed too far, the result will be tritheism.[44]

## Congregational Unity and Multiculturalism

### *Multiculturalism*

Multiculturalism proves to be a homonym. It is a word variously spoken of as: a fact of cultural diversity; a fact of religious diversity; a doctrine of multi-faithism; an assumption of cultural relativism; a principle of public policy towards minorities; and as

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[43] Modalism, Tritheism, or the Pure Revelation of the Triune God, https://contendingforthefaith.org/en/modalism-tritheism-or-the-pure-revelation-of-the-triune-god/.

[44] Modalism, Tritheism, or the Pure Revelation of the Triune God, https://contendingforthefaith.org/en/modalism-tritheism-or-the-pure-revelation-of-the-triune-god/.

a cause of segregation.[45] The first usage of the word is in reference to cultural diversity, a state of affairs, an empirical reality of ethnic plurality within any society[46] and there is no doubt that it has a core of its component both in "opportunities and challenges."[47]

All over the world, cities are becoming more multicultural, and this has a bearing on all human organizational structures which include the church. The intended usage of multiculturalism for this study falls within the ambit of multiplicity and diversity of ethnical differences.

*The Multicultural Church*

Global migration has increased in the past few decades;[48] indeed, the world has become a global village. Chanequa Walker-Barnes quoted Michael Emerson who defined multiracial congregation as "one where no single racial or ethnic group accounts for 80 percent or more of the membership."[49] The church has evolved and continues to evolve. SHOW as a congregation is not an exception in this regard. In an excerpt titled; *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race*, the authors assert that, there is "a significant difference between the practice of the first century

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[45] Jonathan Chaplin, *Multiculturalism: A Christian Retrieval*, Theos, 2011, 32.

[46] Chaplin, *Multiculturalism*, 32.

[47] Chaplin, *Multiculturalism*, 33.

[48] Jacob Poushter and Janell Fetterolf, "A Changing World: Global Views on Diversity, Gender Equality, Family Life And The Importance Of Religion," 22 April 2019, https://www.pewresearch.org/ global/ 2019/04/22/how-people-around-the-world-view-diversity-in-their-countries/.

[49] Chanequa Walker-Barnes, "Why Multicultural Churches Fail - Part One," Collegeville Institute, May 31, 2018, https://collegevilleinstitute.org/bearings/why-multicultural-churches-fail/.

Chanequa Walker-Barnes quoted Michael Emerson, a Sociologist author of the book, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States*.

church and that of the church in the United States. The first-century church demonstrated that the Gospel had the power to cross society's racial and cultural divides in its congregations."[50]

It is on record that "the Church in the United States historically practiced segregation by race and culture in its congregations, thereby implying that the Gospel was powerless to address society's racial and cultural divisions."[51] There is an advancement, thanks to global migrations, which has necessitated the emergence of multicultural churches around cities of the world. With the emergence of multicultural churches of various sizes and cultural compositions, there are various challenges. This calls for the unity of both the purpose (reaching the unreached) and the fellowship (the relationship of the brethren). There is no doubt that the emergence and "development of a multicultural church may always be a challenge due to the varied backgrounds and cultures of the individuals involved and the circumstances of a particular location."[52] This holds true of SHOW with members from different cultures and background. With the incredible blending of cultures and peoples in our cities, multicultural churches are able

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[50] Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, "Excerpts from United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race." *The Princeton Theological Review* 10, no. 2 (2004): 41-48. The authors gave a clarion call for the need of the establishment of 'multiracial and multicultural' congregations in their fuller work titled; United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race, published by Oxford University Press in 2003.

[51] Curtiss Paul DeYoung, Michael O. Emerson, George Yancey, and Karen Chai Kim, "Excerpts from United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race." *The Princeton Theological Review* 10, no. 2 (2004): 41-48.

[52] Uatisone A. Afa'ese, "Multicultural Strategies for Developing a Church with Intentional References to Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Structure as Modeled by the All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church," Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1979-2012, DMin diss., Andrews University, 2013, 69, https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/dmin/4/.

to be vital partners in fulfilling the Great Commission.[53] In starting and growing a multicultural church, "it is not just the numbers of various ethnic groups occupying the pews, but whether or not the leadership of the church reflects the diversity of the body of believers, . . . a response to the unique needs of the believers through innovative worship and fellowship programming, stressing the 'form as well as contents' of spiritual experiences."[54] A particular church may be diverse in its membership, but still lack true diversity in its leadership, its liturgy and worship, its theology and doctrine, and its approach to mission and discipleship.[55] These will continue to pose challenges in an emerging or already existing multicultural church.

A truly multicultural congregation is one in which the membership and leadership are comprised of two or more culturally distinct groups that share power and influence over the church's governance, worship, theology and doctrine, and programming.[56] For healthy multicultural churches, the leadership is especially intentional in ensuring that multiple cultural traditions shape its preaching, teaching, and worship on a daily basis.[57] I agree with Walker-Barnes who asserts a truly multicultural congregation recognizes that no one cultural group has a complete understanding of God's kingdom and that everyone benefits when they all embrace and learn from different groups' views of the Divine.[58]

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[53] Crane, "Multicultural Churches in Global Cities," 121– 35.

[54] Afa'ese, "Multicultural Strategies for Developing a Church with Intentional References to Diversity, Inclusiveness, and Structure," 56.

[55] Walker-Barnes, "Why Multicultural Churches Fail - Part One."

[56] Walker-Barnes, "Why Multicultural Churches Fail - Part One."

[57] Walker-Barnes, "Why Multicultural Churches Fail - Part One."

[58] Walker-Barnes, "Why Multicultural Churches Fail - Part One."

*Congregational Unity and Harmony in a Multicultural Church*

Every congregation, multicultural or not, is uniquely different from any other because they all exhibit dynamic traits for their unique makeup. The need for unity presupposes that disunity is a possibility; disagreements are made for the provisions for resolutions, misgivings, conflicts, or disagreements arise among siblings, best friends, couples, organizations and between nations. Rifts abound everywhere, and the church community is not immune. A congregation does not become multicultural through a recipe that says, "add diversity and stir." It rather becomes multicultural if her leaders undergo a process of transformation through which they examine and become clearer about their own cultural assumptions and limitations, develop an unending passion for learning about and from people of different cultures, and are willing to face and work through their biases.[59]

Putnam opines that conflicts are not avoidable as they significantly form part of an organization's life.[60] It suffices then that conflict is a necessary and unavoidable part of building multicultural congregations.[61] To mitigate conflicts, healthy human relationships require unity, but not uniformity; unity is living in harmony despite our differences.[62] The scenario for disunity or conflicts in human relationship becomes higher where the people are diverse in their cultural upbringing. In any church, "once the

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[59] Chanequa Walker-Barnes, "How Multicultural Churches can Succee*d* - Part Two," Collegeville Institute, June 4, 2018, https://collegevilleinstitute.org/bearings/multicultural-churches-succeed/.

[60] Linda L. Putnam, "Communication and interpersonal conflict in organizations," *Management Communication Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1988): 293-301.

[61] Walker-Barnes, "How Multicultural Churches can Succeed - Part Two."

[62] Joseph F Mali, "Healthy Relationships Require Unity but Not Uniformity," *Vision* 31, no. 6 (2021), https://www.nacc.org/vision/november-december-2021/healthy-relationships-require-unity-but-not-uniformity/.

confounding variable of intercultural differences is added, conflict resolution becomes even more complex."[63] Therefore, leaders should be culturally aware of their congregation's diversity and reflect same when they teach.[64] Harmony is the sense of blending and unity is obtained when all elements of a design fit together to create an orderly, congruous whole[65] that is strong and can relate bearing the burden of the differences in varying cultures. Unity and harmony would be said to be a major factor in the prayer that Jesus offered in John 17 for his disciples and every believer (v21), "that all of them may be one." Albert Shuler's Paradigm for the promotion of a healthy multicultural ministry is instructive. He proposed four goals: namely, reduce conflict, recognize others, respect for cultural differences, and keeping healthy interaction between cultures. [66]

## Multiculturalism and Theological Themes

Having proper knowledge of how to apply our faith is practical theology, and with it, we can make an impact in the world.[67] The doctrine of the Trinity is in fact the most

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[63] Robert Konopaske, John M. Ivancevich, and Michael T. Matteson, *Organizational Behavior and Management,* 11th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2018), 291.

[64] Jacob Dunlow, "Disciples of all nations: The challenge of nurturing faith in multiethnic congregations," *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 14, no. 2 (2017): 285-305.

[65] Principles of Composition, "2023 Fine Design Associates," 21 October 2023, https://finedesign associates.com/resources/principles-of-composition.

[66] Albert Shuler, "4 Goals that Promote Healthy Multicultural Ministry," Lewis Center for Church Leadership, January 16, 2019, https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/4-goals-that-promote-healthy-multicultural-ministry/. It is worthy of note that the goals advanced by Albert Shuler for a healthy multicultural ministry will equally apply in any other ministry or Church setting as these are universal ingredients for creating healthy environments.

[67] Madeline Peña, "Practical Theology: Definition, Viewpoints, Why It Matters," *Just Disciple*, https://justdisciple.com/practical-theology/.

practical of all doctrines. Among other things, it helps us articulate our understanding of the gospel's demands; how personal conversion is related to social transformation; what constitutes "right relationship" within the Christian community and in society at large.[68] Reflecting on Don Browning's assertion, "Theology can be practical if we bring practical concerns to it from the beginning."[69] Here the rubber meets the road as our theology is not productive until it is practical. A practical theology rides on the wings of our relationships to our community. LaCugna posits that the central theme of all trinitarian theology is relationship.[70] We serve the one true God who is relational and invested his love through his son to reconcile man back to himself.

Bringing our ministry to bear on persons from diverse cultures is to be very practical. The connectedness of the doctrine of the Trinity communicates "right relationship" such as noted in Ephesians,[71] particularly in Ephesians 4:1–6 (NIV):

> As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:1–6, NIV).

Pursuing a multicultural church is not and never should be an advocacy or a ground for theological equivocation. Sound doctrine should not be traded on the altar of achieving a multicultural congregation. A church does not have to water down or change her

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[68] LaCugna, "The Practical Trinity," 678-682.

[69] Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 5.

[70] LaCugna, "The Practical Trinity", 678-682.

[71] LaCugna, "The Practical Trinity," 678-682.

theological or doctrinal stance to appeal to any cultural or ethnic audience. Douglas Brouwer in his book *How to Become a Multicultural Church* advocated for "a generous orthodoxy." He was crediting Brian McLaren's use of the word "generous orthodoxy," which McLaren acknowledged was a coinage by Hans Frei, a title to a best-seller. The term, according to Brouwer, "has found its way into the vocabulary of American pastors and occasionally their church members."[72]

> In an age where 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' are lauded as the superior virtues, and holding fast to conviction and Biblical truth is deemed divisive and priggish, the vast majority of pastors and teachers in the American church, have lost their spine, and only proclaim that which is acceptable to the ears of fallen men.[73]

The sufficiency of Scripture should not be compromised as man in his present state are wholly wicked, and therefore, an abomination to the eyes of a holy God (Proverbs 3:32; Proverbs 11:20; Proverbs 16:5; Proverbs 17:15). They are not partially evil; they are not virtually evil; they are entirely evil, to the very core of their being![74]

A structure of theological triage does not imply that Christians may take any biblical truth with less than full seriousness. We are charged to embrace and to teach the comprehensive truthfulness of the Christian faith as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

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[72] Douglas J. Brouwer, *How to Become a Multicultural Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017), 52.

[73] Matthew Roland, "For the Church to Flourish, it Must Return to Sound Doctrine, Pt. 2: Radical Depravity," *The Pastor's Brief*, Nov 13, 2020, Updated Nov 20, 2020, https://www.thepastorsbrief. com/post/for-the-church-to-flourish-it-must-return-to-sound-doctrine-pt-2-radical-depravity.

[74] Roland, "For the Church to Flourish, it Must Return to Sound Doctrine, Pt. 2: Radical Depravity."

There are no insignificant doctrines revealed in the Bible, but there is an essential foundation of truth that undergirds the entire system of biblical truth.[75]

> In every generation, the church is commanded to 'contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.' That is no easy task, and it is complicated by the multiple attacks upon Christian truth that mark our contemporary age. Assaults upon the Christian faith are no longer directed only at isolated doctrines. The entire structure of Christian truth is now under attack by those who would subvert Christianity's theological integrity.[76]

The teaching and preaching of the whole content of the Bible at Shekina House of Worship, a culturally diverse congregation, cannot be without sound doctrinal equivocation.

## Conclusion

Practical theology is a critical reflection about praxis and about theories and perceptions of practice aiming at communicating the Gospel to the world.[77] Such that as SHOW implements, this project will become a catalyst for the communication of the gospel message in such way that undergirds the theologies of the research. Grudem opined that "God in himself has both unity and diversity; it is not surprising that unity and diversity are also reflected in the human relationships he has established."[78] He

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[75] Albert R. Mohler Jr., "A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity," July 12, 2005, https://albertmohler.com/2005/07/12/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity; Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr. is a theologian and ordained minister and serves as president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

[76] Mohler Jr., "A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity."

[77] Júlio César Adam, "Lived Religion and Religion," in *International Handbook of Practical* Theology, ed. Birgit Weyel, Wilhelm Gräb, Emmanuel Lartey, and Cas Wepener (London, UK: De Gruyter, (2022), 192, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110618150-017.

[78] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 268.

identified domains where the trinity plays definite roles; first he identified the marriage union that is "not a triunity as with God, but at least a remarkable unity of two persons, persons who remain distinct individuals yet also become one in body, mind, and spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 6:16–20; Eph. 5:31)." Secondly, the church is identified as another domain of the unity of the trinity at work. He posits that, "in the church we have 'many members' yet 'one body' (1 Cor. 12:12) . . . in the many different members in our churches with different gifts and interests, and we depend on and help each other, thereby demonstrating great diversity and great unity at the same time."[79] Grudem further asserted that:

> Even in the mysterious unity between Christ and the church, in which we are called the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:31–32), we see unity beyond what we ever would have imagined, unity with the Son of God himself. Yet in all this we never lose our individual identity but remain distinct persons always able to worship and serve God as unique individuals.[80]

Also, Grudem expressed that on a daily basis, we see the similar unity of the trinity in our everyday human activities.[81] The trinity is expressed in the following New Testament and the Old Testament Scriptures: Gen 1:26; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22; 13:14; and Ephesians 4:4–6.

Although the doctrine of trinity may not be fully comprehended by human beings, it is not contrary to reason and logic as it is a biblical doctrine. According to Berkhof, it is a doctrine that would have been unknowable except by revelation from God. The Godhead: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are distinct, yet

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[79] Gruden, *Systematic Theology*, 268.

[80] Gruden, *Systematic Theology*, 268.

[81] Gruden, *Systematic Theology*, 269.

undivided, essentially coequal, and of course a mystery understandable only by faith. Grasping the essence, the unity, and dynamics of the trinity pave way for the grasping of the possibility of the diversity of the body of Christ to attaining unity. "Trinity is a mystery far beyond our comprehension. It is the incomprehensible glory of the Godhead."[82] According to LaCugna, "The doctrine of the Trinity is a way of contemplating the mystery of God and of ourselves, a heuristic framework for thinking correctly about God and about ourselves in relation to God."[83] Hence, the pursuit of unity in a multicultural church like SHOW relates to the truth, and the mystery embedded in the Trinity which should be practical in every ministry endeavor and directed to the advancement of the frontiers of the gospel. The next chapter presents the interdisciplinary rail guard for the study.

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[82] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, Fourth ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939), 89.

[83] Catherine M. LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1991), 379.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Bringing to bear a ministry model that fosters unity in a multicultural Church setting entails embracing an interdisciplinary approach of concepts and theories that addressed the subject. Over the last decades, universities and institutions all over the world are allowing interdisciplinary studies on their campuses which have seen the awards of certificates, degrees, and also advanced degrees as earned credentials in this field. Interdisciplinary studies are unique not only because it can be a blend between two or more other fields but because they can permit the ingenuity of an individual to pick and choose what blend of classes they need to achieve desired career goals or paths. According to Moti Nissani, interdisciplinarity in an academic discourse occurs when two or more distinctive disciplines converge; he further presents that it pertains to four realms: namely, knowledge, research, education, and theory.[1]

Although this study is primarily theological, it peeks into theories emanating from the field of psychology and from peace and conflict studies. By concurring with Nissani's position on interdisciplinarity, when distinctive two or more disciplines are engaged in a

[1] Moti Nissani, "Fruits, Salads, and Smoothies: A Working definition of Interdisciplinarity," *The Journal of Educational Thought* 29, no 2 (1995): 121–128.

particular research endeavor, a particular understanding of a subject matter can be enhanced. Moti Nissani graciously presents in another study ten benefits of engaging in interdisciplinary efforts which are:[2]

> i. Creativity often requires interdisciplinary knowledge, ii. Immigrants often make important contributions to their new field, iii. Disciplinarians often commit errors which can be best detected by people familiar with two or more disciplines, iv. Some worthwhile topics of research fall in the interstices among the traditional disciplines, v. Many intellectual, social, and practical problems require interdisciplinary approaches, vi. Interdisciplinary knowledge and research serve to remind us of the unity-of-knowledge ideal, vii. Interdisciplinarians enjoy greater flexibility in their research, viii. More so than narrow disciplinarians, interdisciplinarians often treat themselves to the intellectual equivalent of traveling in new lands, ix. Interdisciplinarians may help breach communication gaps in the modern academy, thereby helping to mobilize its enormous intellectual resources in the cause of greater social rationality and justice, x. By bridging fragmented disciplines, interdisciplinarians might play a role in the defense of academic freedom. [3]

The beauty of interdisciplinary studies includes that it broadens learning capacities and enhances perspective.

## Theories on Peace and Conflict Studies

Theories on peace and conflict will form part of the theoretical framework for this study. According to Okechukwu Ndeche and Samuel O. Iroye, "Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary social science that currently borrows some of its theories from other disciplines to provide philosophical foundations, conduct methodological inquiries, and offer critical explanation for social conflict

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[2] Moti Nissani, "Ten cheers for interdisciplinarity: The Case for Interdisciplinary Knowledge and Research," *Social Science Journal* 34, no 2 (1997): 201–216.

[3] By immigrants in the interdisciplinary context, Moti Nissani meant the input and perspectives of experts from different fields.

situations."[4] Hence Demola Akinyoade, positing that Peace and Conflict Studies enjoys the utility of theories from other fields in the social sciences, went on to list the theories considered to fit this narrative as follows: Animal Behavior Theory; Instinct/Innate Theories of Aggression; Frustration/Aggression Theory; Social Identity Theory; Social Learning Theory; Deterrence Theory; Games Theory; Decision-Making Theory; Ethnic Conflict Theory; Social Conflict Theory; Enemy System Theory; Human Needs Theory; Protracted Social Conflict Theory; Political Economy Theory; Relative Deprivation Theory; Greed/Grievance Theory; Horizontal Inequality Theory; Democratic Peace Theory; Liberal Peace Theory; Peace Education Theory; and Integrated Theories of Peace Education; Peace and Conflict Sensitivity Theory; Conflict Resolution Theory; Just War Theory; and People Power Theory.[5]

## Activity System Theory

The Yrjö Engeström Activity System Theory (AST) will serve as another theory in the theoretical framework for this study. The Activity System Theory, also known as the Activity Theory or the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, is a brain child of Lev Simkhovich Vygotsky and Aleksei Leont'ev, who designed the theory on the premise that behaviorism and psychoanalysis were inadequate approaches to psychology, hence, human activities could be referenced by factoring the dynamics of motivation, societal

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[4] Okechukwu Ndeche and Samuel O. Iroye, "Key Theories in Peace and Conflict Studies and Their Impact on The Study and Practice." *NOUN International Journal of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution* [NIJPCR] 2, no. 2 (August 2022).

[5] Demola Akinyoade, "Theories In Peace and Conflict Research," A paper presented at the International Conference of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP), "Defining and Rethinking Peace and Security Systems in Transitional Democracies," Venue: Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, (March 25th - 27th 2013), http://eprints.abuad.edu.ng/368/ retrieved February 12, 2024.

structures, rules, and the means of doing activities.[6] Cultural-historical activity theory was developed in the 1920s and 1930s by the Russian psychologists Vygotsky and Leont'ev; activity theory has become a global multidisciplinary research approach oriented toward studying work and technologies.[7]

Psychologist Leont'ev, a Russian, had developed the Activity Theory. This was a variant that was advanced by Yrjö Engeström as the Activity System Theory (AST). It used interdisciplinarily, not only in psychology, but also in education, organizational learning, and cultural studies.[8]

The rationale for adopting activity theory as one of the theoretical frameworks for this study is based on its orientation toward the study of work. To drive and work towards promoting unity in a multicultural church or related setting calls for hard work and harmony. Ultimately, it will take committed work to complete the task of the Great Commission as seen in Matthew 28:18-20.

## Interdisciplinary Theoretical Framework: Activity Theory

### *Activity Theory*

Vygotsky, a Russian and Soviet psychologist, conceptualized the theoretical framework currently referred to around the globe as "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

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[6] Charlotte Nickerson, "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory," September 25, 2023, Retrieved November 24, 2023, *Simply Psychology*, https://www.simplypsychology.org/cultural-historical-activity-theory.html.

[7] Yrjö Engeström, "Activity theory as a framework for analyzing and redesigning work," *Ergonomics* 43, no. 7 (2000): 960–974, doi:10.1080/001401300409143.

[8] Victor Kaptelinin, "Activity Theory" Interaction Design Foundation – IxDF, November 21, 2023, https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/book/the-encyclopedia-of-human-computer-interaction-2nd-ed/activity-theory.

(CHAT)" or "Activity Theory." Activity Theory, developed in the 1920s, has two fundamental assumptions underpinning activity theory; firstly, knowledge is mediated through tools and artifacts; and secondly, the basic unit of analysis is defined as an activity that could be anything from something quite significant to something relatively minor.[9]

Activity Theory or the "Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT)," is an interdisciplinary philosophical framework for studying both individual and social aspects of human behavior. The most crucial aspect of Activity Theory is understanding both individual and collective aspects of human practices from a cultural and historical perspective.[10]

*First Generation*

According to Vygotsky, activity theory runs on three main principles: the subject, the use of tools to achieve an object, and the object that is achieved. The object becomes the reason or the motivation for an activity, and the activity is provoked by one or more artifacts, which can also be called tools, instruments, or technologies. Hence, "the process of a subject working towards an object using an artifact creates an outcome. This outcome can be the same or different from the object and even unintended or undesired."[11] Vygotsky illustrates his idea of a "complex, mediated act" described as a

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[9] Ian Robertson, "An Introduction to Activity Theory," Aug 7, 2008, YouTube video, 9:57, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oG0ZvkhzCY.

[10] Oliver Ding, "Yrjö Engeström: the Activity System Model [Activity Theory]," *Activity Analysis*, October 12, 2021, https://www.activityanalysis.net/yrjo-engestrom-the-activity-system-model/.

[11] Charlotte Nickerson, "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory," September 25, 2023, *Simply Psychology*, https://www.simplypsychology.org/cultural-historical-activity-theory.html.

triad of subject, object, and mediating artifact as a 'tool.'[12] All the components impact each other and invariably the outcome of the activity in all its entirety.

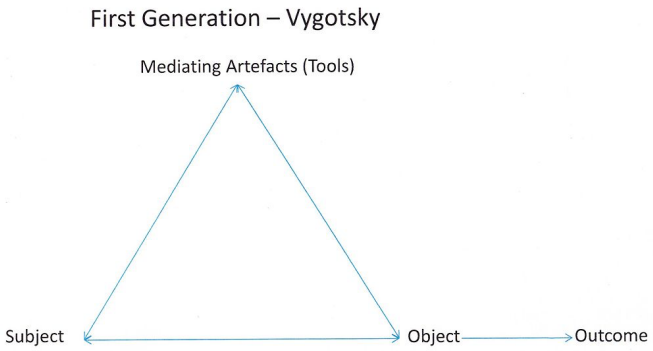


Fig 1: Vygotsky's mediated action triangle

*Second Generation*

Whereas Vygotsky's idea was individually based, Leont'ev extended the activity theory such that it factors how the activity relates to the roles of the individuals who are part of a group or a collective model. Engeström's attained the second-generation activity theory with "an adequate unified model of activity."[13] His idea of activity theory has the following extra nodes or components: community, rules, division of labor, and their interaction.[14]

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[12] Lev Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 40.

[13] Yrjö Engeström, *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 57.

[14] Charlotte Nickerson, "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory," September 25, 2023, *Simply Psychology*, https://www.simplypsychology.org/cultural-historical-activity-theory.html.

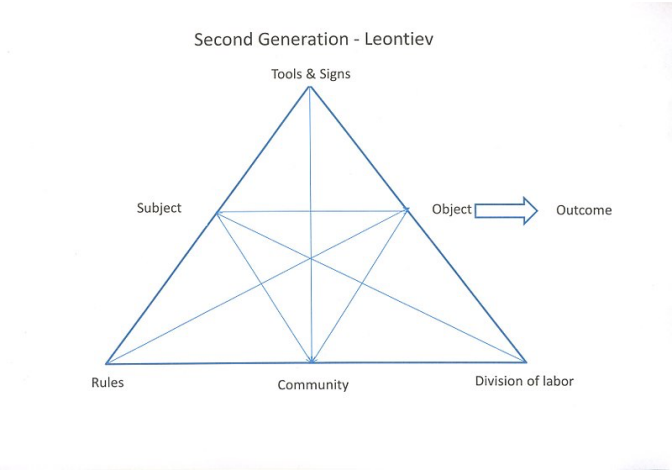


Fig 2

*Third Generation*

The first generation was built on Vygotsky's notion of mediated action. The second generation built on Leont'ev's notion of the activity system. The third generation, emerging in the past fifteen years or so, built on the idea of multiple interacting activity systems focused on a partially shared object.[15] Owing to the diversity and dialogue between different traditions or perspectives as activity theory attained global attention, the third generation added: "conceptual tools to understand dialogue, multiple perspectives, and networks of interacting activity systems."[16]

[15] Engeström, "The future of activity theory," 307.

[16] Engeström, "The future of activity theory," 214.

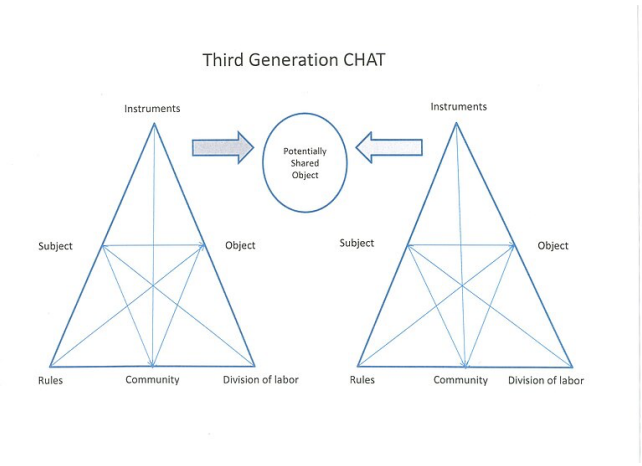


Fig 3: Third-generation CHAT

## Engeström's Activity System Theory (AST)

It is intended that Engeström's Activity System Theory (AST) will serve as the theoretical framework for analyzing and achieving the need for unity in a multicultural church setting; hence, the effort will be made to investigate the Engeström's Activity System Theory (AST), which he advocates with the following elements: subject, object, tools/mediation, rules, community, division of labor, and the outcome. According to Engeström, activity theory is activated by the idea of activity. He opines that:

> First, the activity must be pictured in its simplest, genetically original structural form as the smallest unit that still preserves the essential unity and quality behind any complex activity. Second, activity must be analyzable in its dynamics and transformations, in its evolution and historical change. No static or eternal models will do. Third, the activity must be analyzable as a contextual or ecological phenomenon. The models must concentrate on systemic relations between the individual and the outside world. Fourth, human activity, specifically, must be analyzable as a culturally mediated phenomenon. No dyadic organism-environment models will suffice. This requirement stems from Hegel's insistence on the culturally mediated, *triadic, or triangular* structure of human activity.[17]

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[17] Yrjö Engeström, *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research* (Helsinki, Finland: Orienta-Konsultit Oy., 1987), 32-33.

The following elements comprise the AST framework: subject, object, tools/mediation, community, rules, division of labor, and the outcome. Engeström expanded the unit of activity to include three additional components that explicate the social structure of activity.[18]

*Subject and Object*

Every activity system has a subject with any individual or individuals that share the actions leading to the object with all others within the system.[19] Engeström states, "the subject refers to the individual or sub-group whose agency is chosen as the point of view in the analysis ."[20] As to the object, Engeström presents that "the object refers to the 'raw material' or 'problem space' at which the activity is directed, and which is molded and transformed into outcomes."[21]

*Community and Tools/Mediation*

For activity theory, the community is a group of people who share a common interest in carrying out an activity. About the Vygotsky's mediated-tool triangle, the subject is part of a larger community, which conditions all the other components of the

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[18] Kirsten A. Foot, "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory as Practical Theory: Illuminating the Development of a Conflict Monitoring Network," *Communication Theory* 11, no. 1 (2001), 56-83.

[19] Andy Blunden, *Engeström's Activity Theory and Social Theory*, July 2015, https://www. ethicalpolitics.org/ablunden/pdfs/Engestrom.pdf.

[20] Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, (2003) *The activity system*, as quoted by Andy Blunden in "The Concept of Object," 5, https://www. ethicalpolitics.org/ablunden/pdfs/ Concept%20of%20Object.pdf.

[21] Center for Activity Theory and Developmental Work Research, 2003.

system.[22] A component in the Vygotskian model of tool-mediated activity deployed the use of cultural tools and signs, including language, as mediators which helps to direct the processes that result in the development of human consciousness by the events in the activity.[23]

*Rules*

For Engeström, the rules are the formal or informal regulations that can, to a fluctuating degree, constrain the activity and provide the subject guidance in correct or expected procedures with acceptable interactions among members of the group community. Rules regulate the subject's actions toward an object and structure the social interaction of the group. Rules refer to any variable that tends to guide, condition, or moderate an activity. It also refers to the norms, routines, habits, and values as well as unwritten or tacit practices.[24]

*Division of Labor and Outcome*

In activity theory, division of work connotes the assigned roles of various intervening variables in an activity. It can particularly describe the inputs and

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[22] Mohd H. Hashim and Michael L. Hoover, "A Theoretical Framework for Analyzing Multicultural Group Learning," *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal* 8, Issue 4 (2017): 2707-2716.

[23] Hashim and Hoover, "A Theoretical Framework for Analyzing Multicultural Group Learning," 2017.

[24] Yrjö Engeström and Reijo Miettinen, "Introduction," In *Perspectives on activity theory*, eds. Yrjö Engeström, Reijo Miettinen, and Raija-Leena Punamäki (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-16.

involvements of the various community members who would share the activity.[25] McAvinia envisions a different context and particularly identifies a classroom where everyone – teachers, students, and assistants – are involved, positing that the realization of the object is shared by everyone involved in the said activity.[26] According to Foot, division of labor is the relatively horizontal division of tasks and the vertical division of power, positions, access to resources, and rewards.[27] According to activity theory, objects are "transformed" by activities into outcomes.[28] Engeström describes outcome as what is achieved in an activity by involving physical and symbolic, external, and internal tools.[29]

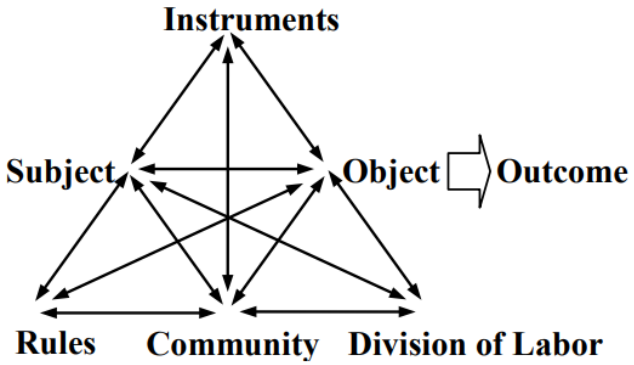


Fig 4: Engeström 'Root Model of Human Activity'[30]

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[25] Charlotte Nickerson, "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, September 25, 2023," *Simply Psychology*, https://www.simplypsychology.org/cultural-historical-activity-theory.html.

[26] Claire McAvinia, *Online Learning, and its Users: Lessons for Higher Education* (Kidlington, UK: Chandos Publishing/Elsevier, 2016), 69.

[27] Kirsten A. Foot, "Cultural-Historical Activity Theory as Practical Theory: Illuminating the Development of a Conflict Monitoring Network," *Communication Theory* 11, no. 1, (2001), 56-83.

[28] McAvinia, "*Online Learning and its Users: Lessons for Higher Education*," 67.

[29] James R. Taylor, "The Communicative Construction of Community: Authority and Organizing," in A. Sannino, H. Daniels, and K. Gutierrez, eds, *Learning and expanding with activity theory* (New York, NY: Cambridge, 2009), 228-239.

[30] Andy Blunden, *Engeström's Activity Theory and Social Theory,* July 2015, https://www.ethicalpolitics.org/ablunden/pdfs/Engestrom.pdf.

**Interdisciplinary Theoretical Framework: Theories in Peace and Conflict**

Ndeche and Iroye observed that although it is desirable to have a unified theory for peace and conflict, they maintained that the actors and factors for the "causes, levels, manifestations, and management intervention strategies in conflict situations" always differ and impedes on that possibility. Webel expressed further that peace is progressive peacekeeping and peacemaking, requiring a lively and ongoing personal and collective transformation, adding that it ought to be "pacifistic rather than pacifying in its means of psychological and political development."[31] "With globalization comes professionalism," hence, peace and peace studies should have no borders whatsoever. Strategically speaking, there has been many advancements in peace studies in the past five decades and much more advancements will be seen in another five decades all over the world.[32] Webel presents that dictionary meaning of abstract terms are limited; hence, he defined peace as "a linchpin of social harmony, economic equity, and political justice, but peace is also constantly ruptured by wars and other forms of violent conflict. Like happiness, peace remains so near . . . and yet, like enduring love, so far."[33] Ndeche and Iroye list the following as theoretical framework for peace: theory of peace, peacebuilding theory, theory of justice, conflict theory, and realist theory.

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[31] Charles Webel, "Introduction: Toward A Philosophy and Metapsychology of Peace", in Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, ed., *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 8.

[32] Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, "Peace and conflict studies: Looking back, looking forward," in Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, ed., *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies* (New York, NY: Routledge. 2007), 397-98.

[33] Charles Webel, "Introduction: Toward A Philosophy and Metapsychology of Peace," in Webel, Charles and Galtung, Johan, ed., *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies* (New York, NY: Routledge. 2007), 5-6.

*Theory of Peace*

According to R. J. Rummel, "peace is also seen as concord, or harmony and tranquility. It is viewed as peace of mind or serenity, especially in the East. It is defined as a state of law or civil government, a state of justice or goodness, a balance or equilibrium of Powers."[34] Leshem and Halperin cited Johan Galtung who is considered the pioneer of peace studies, a venture he has been into for over six decades. Galtung's theoretical work on Peace suggests that "peace can be interpreted as the absence of bloodshed and war" which he called negative peace, contradicting overt violence. He presented further that peace connotes "social relationships characterized by friendship, solidarity, and harmony" calling this positive peace. Lastly, giving a third stance on peace as the emergence or existence of "a sociopolitical order where equality and justice prevails," this he called structural peace.[35]

*Peacebuilding Theory*

Ndeche and Iroye, in their work "Key theories in peace and conflict studies and their impact on the study and practice," hints at the peacebuilding theory which presupposes that there is first a conflict requiring reactive or proactive intervention by a third party. Therefore, peacebuilding in theory and practice envisages a multilateral rather

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[34] Rudolph J. Rummel, *Understanding Conflict and War*, Vol. 5, The Just Peace (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1981), eBook].

[35] Oded Adomi Leshem and Eran Halperin, "Lay theories of peace and their influence on policy preference during violent conflict," *PNAS* 117, no 31 (2020): 18378-18384, https://www.pnas.org/ doi/ epdf/10.1073/pnas.2005928117.

than a unilateral process of active prosocial civic engagements behaviors.[36] This theory they assert creates a win-win result among parties in conflict. Ubuntu is an African philosophy and part of the Zulu phrase, "*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.*" It has been differently nuanced and interpreted to mean among many others, the following: "humanity to others," "I am what I am because of who we all are," "I am because you are." The concept is agelong but was popularized in modern times by Nelson Mandela who reechoed the concept to the world.[37]

*Theory of Justice*

A theory of justice is credited to John Rawls. Thomas Mertens reechoes John Rawls's stance on liberty, fairness, and equality of opportunities among people in an organized society, a reference to the 1971 "A Theory of Justice," a treatise on political philosophy.[38] This theory is spot-on for understanding injustice, because of it "distributive, retributive and restorative justice conceptual frameworks."[39]

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[36] Okechukwu Ndeche and Samuel O. Iroye, "Key Theories in Peace and Conflict Studies and Their Impact on The Study and Practice," *NOUN International Journal of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution [NIJPCR]* 2, no. 2 (August 2022).

[37] Ubuntu, "I am because you are," https://www.afnconference.org.au/ubuntu-i-am-because-you-are/.

[38] Thomas Mertens, "International or Global Justice? Evaluating the Cosmopolitan Approach," in Andreas Follesdal and Thomas Pogge, eds., *Real World Justice: Grounds, Principles, Human Rights, and Social Institutions* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2005), 89.

[39] Okechukwu Ndeche and Samuel O. Iroye, "Key Theories in Peace and Conflict Studies and Their Impact on The Study and Practice," *NOUN International Journal of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution [NIJPCR]* 2, no. 2 (August 2022).

*Conflict Theory*

This is a theory that was put out by Karl Marx (1818-1883). In this theory, Marx opined that in any society, especially a capitalist society, the allocation of their resources is a determinant of the social and relational arrangements. As time progressed, the theory was used to evaluate other social issues which includes "wars, revolutions, poverty, structural inequality, discrimination, and domestic violence."[40]

*Realist Theory*

As a theory, realist theory explains politics from its international standpoint making it state-centric because the survival of the state is its highest goal as it factors the competitive and conflictual side of international relations.[41] Ndeche and Iroye present that this theory explains conceptual and analytical insights as to the reasons that make nations have, develop, and empower theirs military, even their attempt to have nuclear weapons.[42]

## Theoretical Framework and Relationship to the Research Project

Activity theory as a theoretical framework for the study underpins the research problem since it addresses the challenges and disunity of church life that arise by the

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[40] Okechukwu Ndeche and Samuel O. Iroye, "Key Theories in Peace and Conflict Studies and Their Impact on The Study and Practice," *NOUN International Journal of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution [NIJPCR]* 2, no. 2 (August 2022).

[41] Sandrina Antunes and Isabel Camisão, "Introducing Realism in International Relations Theory," *E-International Relations 27* (February 2018): https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/27.

[42] Okechukwu Ndeche and Samuel O. Iroye, "Key Theories in Peace and Conflict Studies and Their Impact on The Study and Practice," *NOUN International Journal of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution [NIJPCR]* 2, no. 2 (August 2022).

multicultural composition of the research context. Activity theory hints at the text considered for the Biblical Foundations of this study. The task of the brethren in the church in Corinth, seen in 1 Cor 12:12–26, was to ensure that "there be no division in the body," as with the "outcome," the target of the varying components of actions of any activity presented in the Theory, so bearing the relationship between the body parts as with apostle Paul's analogy of the co-dependency on each other. Activity theory and the study's historical figure –Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther – sees an association that reflected his life's story. His experience is in tandem with the highlight of the theory. Crowther rose above his peculiar life's challenge to become a harbinger who heralded the gospel message that united regions of Africa's most populated nation. Engeström's activity theory leans to the two theological frameworks adopted for this study: trinitarian theology and practical theology. They bear on the practical life of the church's activity and the cohesion of the components of the Theory as to the harmony of the Holy Trinity.

Sociologically, multiculturalism assumes that society, as a whole, benefits from increased diversity through the harmonious coexistence of different cultures.[43] This aligns with activity theory. Multiculturalism, the concept of lots of people of diverse and varying cultures living and doing things together, brings the various theories of peace to bear with this study — like Desiderius Erasmus, who is credited to have said, "the most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war." Since conflict is a possible product or result of people in a community the place and understanding of peace becomes critical. R. J. Rummel was right in saying that peace has always been among humanity's

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[43] The European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS), "Multiculturalism," November 16, 2023, https://www.populismstudies.org/Vocabulary/multiculturalism/.

highest values — for some, supreme.[44] The aim of this study is to develop a ministry model promoting unity in a multicultural church plant that will put into proper perspective the role of the activity system theory and the theories of peace, especially for a church like SHOW.

## Conclusion

Engeström's activity theory is primarily a framework for analyzing and understanding human activities in a sociocultural context. The most important aspect of activity theory is understanding both individual and collective aspects of human practices from a cultural and historical perspective.[45] While it might not be directly applicable to the interpretation of biblical text like 1 Cor 12:12–26, the pericope exegeted for the biblical foundation's aspect of this study, which aims to develop a ministry model that fosters unity in a multicultural church, it can offer insights into the social and communal aspects of the passage. 1 Corinthians 12:12–26 speaks metaphorically about the church as the body of Christ. It uses the analogy of different body parts functioning together to emphasize the interconnectedness and interdependence of the members within the Christian community, where each member has a unique role, just as each body part has a specific function.

Engeström's activity theory framework draws parallels between the Theory elements: subject, object, tools/mediation, rules, community, division of labor, and

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[44] Rudolph J. Rummel, *Understanding Conflict and War,* Vol. 5, The Just Peace (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1981), eBook.

[45] Oliver Ding, "Yrjö Engeström: the Activity System Model [Activity Theory]," Activity Analysis, October 12, 2021, https://www.activityanalysis.net/yrjo-engestrom-the-activity-system-model/.

outcome, together with the corresponding dynamics within the Christian community described in the scriptural text.

- Subject: The individual believers or members of the Church community.
- Object: The common goal or purpose of the community is to fulfill the mission of the Church and live according to Christian principles.
- Tools/Mediation: The spiritual gifts as seen in 1 Cor 12:8–10: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues by the same Spirit. Other mediators could include talents and resources that believers bring to the community for the common good.
- Rules: The ethical and moral guidelines provided in the Bible shape the behavior and interactions of the community members.
- Community: The Christian community itself represents the broader social context.
- Division of Labor: The manifestation of the diversity of spiritual gifts and roles within the community, as emphasized in the metaphor of different body parts and how each performs their duties.
- Outcome: The effective functioning and growth of the Christian community, with each member contributing to the overall well-being and mission of the body of Christ.[46]

While Engeström's Theory is not designed for interpreting religious or spiritual texts, its focus on social dynamics, collaboration, and the interplay of different elements can offer a complementary perspective to understanding the dynamics shown in texts like 1 Cor 12:12–26. Peace is a quality that can enhance unity in any relationship, illuminate how the diverse members of the Christian community work together for a common purpose, and how their interactions contribute to the overall health and functioning of the

[46] This rubric is based on Oliver Ding, "Yrjö Engeström: the Activity System Model [Activity Theory]" only as a structure.

community of the church, particularly, Shekinah House of Worship in New York. The next chapter highlights the outcome of the study as implemented in the ministry context.

# CHAPTER SIX

# PROJECT ANALYSIS

## Introduction

In this last chapter of the project, "Developing A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity in a Multicultural Church," I will present the analysis of the data collected from implementing the study. This chapter reviews the tangibleness of the project as implemented at the ministry context. Leading up to this project has been a series of exposure and expertise developed in various areas of competence over the years which included but are not limited to my exposure and experience as a pastor who has been a part of diverse ministry settings and relates with the text: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalms 133:1, NRSV).

Adding to the project has also been a series of personal strengths from my role in family and every ministry assignment that has been held in the past culminating to the present. I have had additional training in the psychology of adjustment and interpersonal relationships, organizational behavior, conflict resolution, and multicultural perspectives in counseling on diverse work. As the principal investigator, this has equipped me to identify, analyze, and proffer clues on how to address whatever problems that will be noticed in my ministry context.

Shekina House of Worship has always been a multicultural congregation. Not minding her size, she has had ministry impact and is set to achieve more; hence, there is a

need to foster unity amidst her multicultural outlook. Leading up to implementing this project has been some foundations which included the exposure and personal experiences, and there are some perceived gaps needing to be addressed in the local context. Other foundations include the biblical basis for the subject of fostering unity in a multicultural church. Also, there is the historical foundation premised on the life and times of a bridge builder – African's own Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the essence of the trinity, and the connection it provides theologically such that there is applicability to the life of the Church and presenting the church as a unique system with all her component parts functioning in unison.

## Methodology

The problem is that internal conflict causes disunity within the multicultural membership. It is anticipated that if a cross-section of the church's membership participates in the classes and in the focus group on cultural unity in the church, then data will be collected necessary to address the effectiveness of the model which aims to foster unity among members of the congregation. The hypothesis addresses the problem at the ministry context of the lack of unity amongst the different cultures present within the ministry's congregation.

## Research Design

The research design deployed for this study is the qualitative research method which employed the administration of pre- and post-questionnaires. "Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe

to a social or human problem."[1] The project implementation was scheduled to begin on September 6, 2024, and end on October 11, 2024; however, the dates were adjusted to accommodate some other programs of the church. The project eventually was kicked off on September 8, 2024 and ran through October 20, 2024. There was an added week from the initially proposed six-week implementation period. The family fun service day was not a part of the initial schedule but was incorporated into the project.

*Data Collection Method*

Qualitative research can be conducted with small samples and since Shekina House of Worship is not a big church, this research method was used; but it can pose the question of how my research sample was selected to ensure that no member of the congregation was disenfranchised. To this end, the project was announced in the church through a flyer (see Appendix A) that was produced which was circulated among the members. The following data collection methods were used: administration of questionnaires, focus group, journaling, and observation.

*The Administration of Questionnaires and Focus Group*

One of the instruments used to collect information for this study was the Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory. This instrument has been used by some churches for various studies. The data gathering method was more of a group interview

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[1] John W. Creswell and David J. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 6th ed. eBook (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2023), 39.

session at the end of the lessons delivered. The transcription of the recorded focus group discussions helped to evaluate participants' affective domain of learning which is about their feelings or emotions.

*Journaling and Observation and Note Taking.*

Further data was collected using this method. These were entries made by the participants in their various journals by the participants as derivative benefits of the teaching sessions they received. This mirrored what they learned from the teaching sessions that took place during the implementation stage of the study. They made these entries on their own and in their private time outside of the lesson time. In this data collection method, I observed and took notes of cues and all other non-verbal actions from the participants in the project.

## Implementation

The implementation of the project initially was planned for a six-week period, but eventually it took seven weeks to complete. This was because the family fun service was not initially visualized to happen. It was a program part of the church's initiative, and it was soon adjusted so that it could be incorporated into the project.

*Week One - Introduction Session*

Participants were welcomed. Members of the church had been sensitized prior to this time with call for volunteers. On this day, I welcomed nine participants who were present and had indicated interest in volunteering for the study. I opened the session with prayer to kick start the entire exercise. The volunteers presented their signed Informed

Consent Form (see Appendix C) which were their official contract to be a part of this study. Everyone present was made to introduce themselves. This was some formality as members already knew each other.

The activity on this day included introducing the study to the participants and explaining what their rights and obligations were as to the study. The need for the study and how it promised to benefit the church was explained. The participants were thanked for coming on to be a part of the study. The primary text of scripture directing the study, 1 Cor 12:12–26, was read to the audience in different translations: the King James Version and the New American Standard Bible. The stationery needed for the study was distributed to the volunteers. Journals booklets and pens were distributed to participants. The pre-test instrument was given to the nine participants who had volunteered and were present for the session. All nine participants of the study were present for the first day of the training session which lasted for over an hour. The session was closed with prayer from one of the participants.

*Week Two - Lesson Session One*

The participants were welcomed for this second week of the project implementation session. One of the volunteers offered to say an opening word of prayer. On this day eight participants showed up. A lesson on the biblical basis for cultural diversity was shared with reference to 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and Psalm 133. This session particularly attempted to explore and validate that there is a biblical basis for the subject of unity among members of a local church. The class ended with a focus group discussion. Participants were reminded to make entries into their journal for the week's lesson. I gave the closing prayers.

*Week Three - Lesson Session Two*

The participants were welcomed for this third week of the project implementation session. A volunteer was asked to pray to get the session started. Fellowship as a framework for cultural unity was the lesson taught on the family fun service. It was pre-announced that food would be available in this meeting as it coincided with one of the church's programs. The subject of fellowshipping together was the basis of the lesson on this day. The text of scripture for this lesson was taken from Acts 2:42-47 with emphasis placed on verse 46: "Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart." The reference text of scripture was 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and Psalms 133. For all the classes, references were made to the key scriptures for the project which is 1 Corinthians 12:12-26. Eight of the study participants were present for this lesson session. The class ended with a focus group discussion. Participants were reminded to make entries into their journal for the week's lesson. I gave the closing prayers.

*Week Four - Lesson Session Three*

I gave the opening prayers for this week's training encounter. After warmly welcoming the audience, I thank them for their sacrifice. I told them that the entire team was already in the midpoint of the training session, and I encouraged them to continue to be resilient and dogged. The topic for the day was introduced, which was the historical benefits of cultural diversity. As far as the lesson outlines, I mentioned the importance of historical accounts, particularly the subject that was under investigation. The scriptural text was Roman 15:30-31; Genesis 1:1, 11:1–9; and Colossians 3:11. As usual, references were still made to the texts: 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and Psalms 133. It was another good

session. Eight of the participants were present for this lesson. The class ended with a focus group discussion. Participants were reminded to make entries into their journal for the week's lesson. I gave closing prayers.

*Week Five - Lesson Session Four*

To open the fifth session of the project, which is the fourth day of the training, the topic for the day's lesson was "spiritual discipline as framework for cultural diversity." I requested a volunteer among the participants to open the session with prayer. The day's focus was how as Christians we understand and practice spiritual disciplines. The three disciplines of prayer, service, and worship were taught; the trainer emphasized how active participation in these spiritual disciplines as Christians could be helpful ingredients that fosters cultural diversity in a congregation. The scriptural text was James 5:16 and the reference text again was the projects anchor scripture — 1 Corinthians 12:12–26. Seven participants were present for this lesson session. The class ended with a focus group discussion. Participants were reminded to make entries into their journal for the week's lesson. I gave the closing prayer.

*Week Six - Lesson Session Five*

This week was the last training day and the sixth week of the project implementation. I gave the opening prayer after welcoming the participants. The lesson was titled "the Church as a system." The scriptural text was 1 Peter 4:10 and Psalms 139:13-14. The reference text was 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 and Ecclesiastes 4:12. The teacher expounded on how the church should be seen as a system.

As a system, the church is an organized entity with several component parts. “Though we are many, we are one body in Christ.” Psalm 133 encourages us to be together in unity. The word says it is good for mankind to dwell together in unity. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 explains that the church is a system with so much diversity. (See Hebrew 13:5; Psalm 2; and Habakkuk 3). Eight of the participants were present for this lesson session. The class ended with a focus group discussion. Participants were reminded to make entries into their journal for the week’s lesson. A volunteer was requested to say the closing prayer.

*Week Seven – Last Session*

After a warm welcome and some moments of laughter and fun among the participants, I gave the opening prayers. This was the last day for the implementation of the project at Shekina House of Worship. Participants were appreciated for their time, their devotion, and commitment for the entire period of the study. They were particularly commended for their availability. During the entire project, the attendance was very good. There was a participant who became ill and missed a day; another participant traveled out of town on one for the days we had met for the classes. In all, there were about three cases of absenteeism. It is always said that; “life happens.” Otherwise, it was a well-attended program. More than the attendance was the enthusiasm of the participants. On this final day, all nine of the participants for the study were in attendance; they all returned their journal booklets. The post-test survey questionnaire was administered, and like the first day of the project, participants filled them in and returned them. I gave the closing prayer.

## Summary of Learnings

The summary of findings for the study revealed the following demographic details about the gender, age, years of membership at SHOW, the highest level of education, and the marital status of participants in the study.

*Demographic Data*

Table 1: Gender

| Gender | Number |
|---|---|
| Male | 4 |
| Female | 5 |

Table 2: Age

| Age Range | Number |
|---|---|
| 15 - 24 | 0 |
| 25 - 34 | 2 |
| 35 - 44 | 3 |
| 45 - 54 | 1 |
| 55 - 64 | 3 |
| 65 - 74 | 0 |

Table 3. Years of Membership

| Years of Membership | Number |
|---|---|
| 1 – 3 | 3 |
| 4 – 6 | 5 |
| 7 – 9 | 1 |
| 10 and more | 0 |

Table 4. Education

| Education | Number |
|---|---|
| Some High School | 0 |
| High School | 0 |
| Associate's Degree | 2 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 3 |
| Master's Degree | 3 |
| Ph.D. or higher | 1 |
| Trade School or Apprenticeship | 0 |

Table 5. Marital Status

| Marital Status | Number |
|---|---|
| Married | 7 |
| Single | 1 |
| Divorced / Separated | 1 |
| Widowed | 0 |

*Pre-and-Post Survey Results*

Pre-survey data was gathered using Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory. (WDCI). The inventory addressed the following six areas: perceptions, leadership, worship, visual, educational, and events.

*Perceptions, Attitudes, Values – What are the overall dispositions towards issues of cultural diversity?*

In the domain of perception, the pre-test result reveals that the healing and appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity are the values of the leadership of our congregation. It also pointed out that members of the congregation's ethnic diversity are being recruited and equipped for leadership. Lastly, the congregation addresses root causes of every form of discrimination.

*Leadership/Organizational Structure – Do the leadership at Shekina House of Worship set the congregation's course?*

In this domain of the inventory, the leadership and organizational structure were generally less in comparison to the post test result.

*Worship – Does the type and quality of worship at Shekina House of Worship inspire the members to a greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of God's people?*

In this domain of the administered WDCI, more respondents agree that the gospel message is expressed in ways relevant to diverse people and that voice is given to issues important to diverse people in the worship.

*Visual – What type of visuals is seen in Shekina House of Worship?*

This domain of the inventory did show a generally lesser perspective of all items of how the church's diversity is expressed.

*Educational – What are the types of resources that Shekina House of Worship read, study and advance?*

The items in the educational domain of the inventory reveals that only in three of the nine items are the pre-test entries by the participants higher than the post-test. That the educational materials used in SHOW do reflect a variety of ethnicities and cultures amidst the regularly offered classes on diversity sensitivity issues.

*Events – Does Shekina House of Worship organize events that expand our experiences and perspectives?*

In this domain of the inventory, participants interestingly agree that the events organized by Shekina House of Worship help to expand their lived experiences and perspectives on the variety of ethnic and cultural traditions of the members in the congregation and hence celebrate the diversity of cultures in the congregation.

*Post-Project Survey Results*

The analysis of data collected from the post-survey was gathered from the Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory (WDCI). Like the pre-test survey entries, the inventory addressed the following six areas: perceptions, leadership, worship, visual, educational, and events.

*Perceptions, Attitudes, Values – What are the overall dispositions towards issues of cultural diversity?*

In the domain of perception, attitudes, and values, the post-test survey results revealed that all the participants agreed that it is sometimes true and true most of the time that opportunities are provided for discussion on values of diversity between the congregation and its leaders and that leaders comprehend and communicate the way in which ethnic, economic, social, and political justice make visible God's offer of full life for all. Also, the positions held by leadership on issues like racism, poverty, and violence are consistently held before the people. All the respondents attested that the church has in place a process of reconciliation such that situations where discrimination will be addressed.

*Leadership/Organizational Structure – Do the leadership at Shekina House of Worship set the congregation's course?*

In this domain of the inventory, all the respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the leadership and organizational structure promotes anti-racism, diversity, and multicultural ethos. The leadership is reasonably conscious of diversity, and they have a strategy to address issues of racism in our congregation. Also, the church and her leaders have a system of greeting such that people who come to attend services are warmly

welcomed. Participants all agreed that the "greeting team" are well trained and well represents the ethnic units of the congregation.

*Worship – Does the type and quality of worship at Shekina House of Worship inspire the members to a greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of God's people?*

In this domain of the administered WDCI, the post-test results show that all the respondents agree that the church gives voice in worship to issues important to diverse people. It is also an observed and evident trait that as a congregation people and visitors from every cultural background are not only welcomed to the services but they are all heartily befriended. Guests are helped and supported before any service, during a service, and after every worship service.

*Visual – What type of visuals is seen in Shekina House of Worship?*

This domain of the inventory did show a generally high perception among the participants that the different visuals of the church agree with the assumptions that cultural diversity is well represented.

*Educational – What are the types of resources that Shekina House of Worship read, study, and advance?*

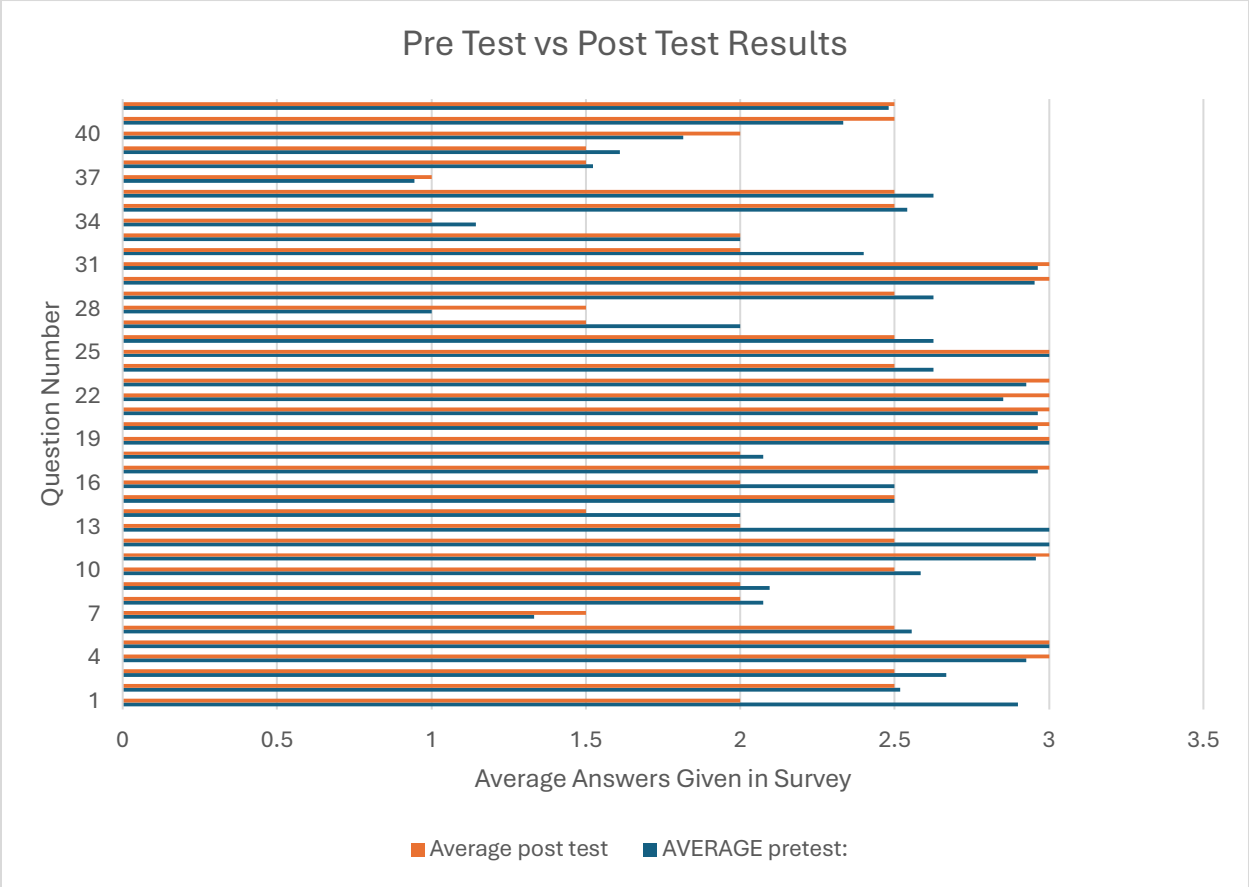
The items in the educational domain of the inventory reveal that only in three of the nine items are the pre-test entries by the participants higher than the post-test items. So, the post-test survey results reveal that in six of the nine items of the inventory, educational materials used in SHOW do reflect the diversity in the ethnic and cultural makeup of the congregation.

Eight of the participants agreed that the church strives to teach respect for diversity and that the scope of training resources demonstrates that reality. More than half of the participants agree that the church is sensitive to the differences in teaching and learning styles among people from a variety of cultures and traditions. The responses of the participants attest that the congregation's faith is presented in terms that expresses the contribution of minority cultures as well as the dominant culture. Lastly, it is agreed by most of the participants that off-site engagements have been helpful for members of the congregation in dealing with cultural diversity and that they agree that the church will not be biased to offer her resources for training in diversity awareness.

*Events – Does Shekina House of Worship organize events that expand our experiences and perspectives?*

In this domain of the inventory, participants tend to not all agree that the events organized by Shekina House of Worship help to expand the variety of ethnic and cultural traditions of the members as much as the responses that were offered in the pre-test survey.

*Pre-Survey Results vs Post Survey Results*




*Focus Group*

The following questions were addressed during the focus group discussion sessions:

i. What is your perception of harmony or unity in a church?

ii. Present your understanding of the "human parts" analogy in 1 Cor 12:12–27 concerning the church?

iii. Name the likely avenues or ways that fellowship among brethren in the church can be expressed.

iv. What is your idea of a multicultural church?

v. In your own view, is cultural diversity advantageous or disadvantageous and why?

vi. How does 1 Cor 12:12–27 represent or advocate for a multicultural church?

*Journal Entries from Participants*

With the assigned number for the participants respectively as: 1310, 1410, 1510, 1610, and 1710.

*Participant One – 1310*

*Week One*

The Pre-test was done.

*Week Two*

There was also a discussion on unity and how the power of the Holy Spirit makes us one. If the Holy Spirit lives in us, it does not matter where we are from; we are one body.

*Week Three*

The church had a fun day where families came together and participated in various activities like games and playing together. Although we are from different cultures, I learned there is unity because of God's love for everyone. Also, food influences unity.

*Week Four*

Wherever we go, we meet people from diverse places. My church, which is a multicultural church, praises the Lord in a unified manner.

*Week Five*

Praising God with instruments is important in our worship. Together, the instruments make one sound in worship to glorify the highest God. Audiovisuals are frequently used during worship to be effective. There is a unity of sound in a multicultural church. Since music speaks to our soul, we should be careful of the music we listen to.

*Week Six*

The church is seen as a system. Though we are many, we are one body in Christ. Psalm 133 encourages us to be together in unity. The word says it is good for mankind to dwell together in unity. 1 Cor 12:12–27 explains that the church is a system with so much diversity. See, Heb 13:5, Psalm 2 and, Habakkuk 3.

*Week Seven*

A post-test was done today. At the end of the sessions, I learned that diversity does not separate us. I also learned that all our skills, talents, and abilities complement each other. As children of God, we are encouraged to see each other as one family rather than looking down on each other because of our nationality.

*Participant Two - 1410*

*Week One*

I call this session the orientation.

*Week Two*

We are all important. We need the Holy Spirit to help us unite with each other. Every member of the church is important. No one is more important than the other. The Holy Spirit gives us ideas that help solve challenges and change our situations.

*Week Three*

God did not create us to live in isolation. Throughout scripture, believers are encouraged to maintain fellowship with each other in and out of the church. Today, we had a family fun event. This is an excellent example of getting together to fellowship as one.

*Week Five*

Today as a church, we were all assigned to reflect on God's goodness and the power of prayer as with other spiritual disciplines. There were prayers made for members of the congregation who were ill, and we believed in God for their full healing. The scripture of the day was James 5:16.

*Week Seven (Journal booklet returned*).

*Participant Three – 1510*

*Week Three*

My takeaway is that we should not think less of any other member, regardless of their background or culture, we are all one in Christ.

*Week Four*

Members from the New Jersey Tabernacle and Shekinah House of Worship spent time together in fellowship. Regardless of background, we all had a good time. Fellowship in this manner allows relationships to develop and grow. We get a better understanding of each other's cultures and backgrounds. There was also good healthy competition among believers.

*Week Six*

The James 5:16 scripture says "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availed much." Jacob was cited, who said; "I will not let you go…." Showing that praying and not giving up brings about desired change in relationships.

*Participant Four – 1610*

*Week Two*

My takeaway is that the Holy Spirit unites all believers into one body. It truly highlights the beyond-infinite power of God. Imagine putting together many different perspectives and realities while we all live. Being able to compress it all into one while allowing each entity to live separately.

*Week Three*

This was a "Family Fun Day" and two scriptures come to mind for a fun day such as this. Proverbs 17:22 and Psalms 133:1. I am reminded that once again we are all of one body. A cheerful heart in each of us is good medicine. While one of us may be feeling down and out, a cheerful spirit can eradicate those feelings of doubt or depression.

*Week Four*

Humans throughout history have tried many times to live separately, but to no avail.

*Week Five*

The body is one with many members. Today, I reflected on how each person in my church family plays a unique role both by their uniqueness and various giftings. Just like the body has many parts, our family works best when everyone contributes in their

own way. Each of us brings something special, and together we are stronger and more complete. This encourages me to value the different strengths we all offer.

*Week Six*

Today I reflected on the various instruments we use in ministry to express and share God's word beyond just words. Preaching, dancing, music, visuals, and even acts of service are all powerful tools in worship and outreach. Each of these instruments connects with people in unique ways, helping them experience God's love tangibly. It shows that no matter how we serve whether through speaking, creative arts, or behind the scenes work, each instrument is important in building up the church and spreading the gospel.

*Participant Five – 1710*

*Week Two*

Having the Holy Spirit is important for the growth of the church. The Holy Spirit helps us to be bold and speak the truth of the gospel to others in love.

*Week Three*

When we come together to eat and have fellowship in an atmosphere of love, food, and fun, it fosters unity in the body of Christ.

*Week Five*

Prayer is key for the unity of the church; prayer makes us see each other as one; prayer makes us love each other; and it unites us as a body of Christ.

*Week Six*

The Church is a system that has different parts and they function as one, even though we are from different parts of the world. In the church, Christ makes us function and work together to achieve our goals.

*Participant Six – 1810*

*Week Two*

The power of the Holy Spirit allows us to connect to God and with others.

Week Three

Families coming together in the name of Jesus for a day of worship and fun. strengthens bonds and relationships between church members and their families.

*Week Five*

Praying together unifies us, regardless of our differences culturally. When praying in groups together, it is no longer about "Me/I." The individual but rather, focuses on whatever we are bringing to God in earnest prayer. We unite in prayer, regardless of differences because of our shared belief in Jesus Christ.

*Week Six*

When are all filled with God's spirit, there is a connection between each of us. We may all hail from different cultures, but we work together to form one functioning body.

*Participant Seven – 1910*

*Week Two*

We learned how the Holy Spirit brings unity in the body of Christ among people in the congregation. Worship to bring self-closer to the Holy Spirit.

*Week Three*

The family fun day together with members of the congregation. It was fun and fellowship. Do not forsake the assembly of the brethren.

*Week Six*

The church is a system with multiple parts coming together as one. How does the church function as a system of different people coming together as one body. 1 Corinthians 12:12–27. I see joy and celebration. For me, Eccl 3:1–4 rings a bell. With these weeks of interaction and learning, I just recall that there are seasons in life. "… a time for everything, a time to laugh, and a time to dance."

*Participant Eight – 2010*

*Week Two*

The power of the Holy Spirit comes with great benefits. It enables us Christians to be better people and better eyewitnesses for God.

*Week Three*

The family fun day in church brought members together. We participated in games and shared different dishes. Experiencing different cultures within the church gives a sense of unity.

*Week Five*

I learned some more about praying. That prayer is important for a Christian, in Ephesians 6:18, it talks about praying for each other.

*Week Six*

I see the body of Christ better as a component with many parts. In the church as a body, the head is unable to function without the neck. There are different roles we play in each other's lives in the church. All in all, we are one body under one God. I am happy about our engagements these past weeks. Regardless of our culture, we all connect with each other through music and the Word.

*Participant Nine – 2110*

*Week Two*

The importance of being united in the body of Christ is evident as the Bible says each body part is needed to ensure the smooth running of the church. As I learned this, I will do my best to be more involved in the body.

*Week Three*

I always found it essential for members of the body of Christ to remain in fellowship. It's how we relate to and encourage with one another in Christ. I enjoy spending time with my fellow brethren, hearing testimonies, and feeling connected to God that way in a very relaxed atmosphere.

*Week Five*

I've always been taught that prayers change things. Now I am aware that I can increase my prayer life, even more. I know for certain that prayer works in helping me to accept and appreciate other people in the Church.

*Week Six*

As I learned earlier that we are all one body in Christ, I further learned that each body part must play a role. One is a prophet, one is a pastor, one is a helper, and so forth. I look forward to continuously serving the body in my unique capacity.

*Observation*

This data collection method was not moderated as others, but the feedback received from the participants of the study and other members of the church based on the project was very commendable. The data collected and analyzed evinced support for the hypothesis that if a cross-section of the church members participate in the training, then they will be able to build and continually enhance healthy and sustainable relationships among fellow congregants.

## Conclusion

The study revealed that the training to foster unity among members of Shekina House of Worship was much needed. The problem in my context was that of conflict and disunity resulting from the multicultural diversity of the membership. Hence the provision of needed tools to enhance healthy relationships will produce sustainable growth and meaningful ministry in the multicultural congregation, resulting in the "Developing A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity in A Multicultural Church."

The anchor scripture for the study is the text in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 that presented the body as one although having many parts. But as with many parts, the body is one. The text also hints that as being baptized in one spirit there is neither Jews nor Gentiles, slave or free. The life and times of Bishop Samuel Crowther also depicted that we could pursue unity even amidst hatred and offences.

The proposed hypothesis for the study was supported presenting that the project was successful. The lesson intervention reveals that the post-test project survey revealed that there was significant difference when compared to the pre-test. Most of the activities

planned went as planned, but a few did not. Initially the sessions were planned to be on Fridays, but it had to be changed based on the peculiarity of the residents of most participants. Some live in Connecticut, some live in New Jersey, while others live in New York. So, it was agreed that the meeting be moved to Sundays.

The members and leadership of Shekina House of Worship were delighted with the project. Weeks after the family fun service, members were still talking about the service and all that transpired, and some are asking when the fun service will be conducted again.

## APPENDIX A

EVENT FLYER

united
Theological Seminary
Seeking Participants for a Study
Study Title:
Developing A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity In A Multicultural Church
Why participate?
The study aims to investigate one of the challenges of church life; the problem of rift and disunity resulting from diversity of the culture of members.
Who can participate?
Participants for the study should be members of Shekinah House of Worship, Queens, NY.
Members participating in the study should have attained 18 years
A commitment to attend six weekly sessions, each session is 60 - 65 minutes long once weekly for the six-week period.
For more information contact:
Emmanuel Enefazu-Ossai
Principal Investigator
eeossai1@united.edu
ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com
765.409.6483

## APPENDIX B

INVITATION LETTER

**Rev. Emmanuel Enefazu-Ossai**
United Theological Seminary | 4501 Denlinger Road | Dayton, OH 45426
eeossai1@united.edu
ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com
765 409 6483

August 1, 2024.

**To Whom It May Concern**,

## Seeking Participants for a Study

Calvary greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I humbly request your willingness to participate in a study for my Doctor of Ministry degree research at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH where I am currently a student.

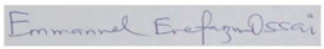
The study titled; *Developing A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity In A Multicultural Church*, aims to benefit participants with knowledge on how to have healthy interactions with persons of different cultures.

You are receiving this letter because you are currently a member here in my 'ministry context' at Shekinah House of Worship, 145-09 Rockaway Boulevard, South Ozone, New York 11436.

Participants should be 18 years and older, and commit to attending the six-week sessions, each session will be about 60 - 65 minutes long once every week between September 6 - October 11, 2024.

Feel free to contact me with questions or inquiries that you may have.

Thank you.



**Emmanuel Enefazu-Ossai** - Principal Investigator
eeossai1@united.edu
ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com
765.409.6483

## APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Investigator Name: Emmanuel Enefazu-Ossai
Contact Information: Shekina House of Worship
145-09 Rockaway Boulevard, South Ozone, NY 11436.
ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com
7654096483

**Introduction:**
I am a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH.

**Purpose:**
I am conducting a study on: Developing A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity in A Multicultural Church.

**Requirements for Participation:**
You were invited to participate in this study because you are a member of this church and have already turned 18 years.

**Procedures:**
If you consent to be in the study, you will be required to come to the Church Hall 6 different times, once a week for a six-week period. We will have some lessons taught and focus group discussions, all of which will be between 60 - 65 minutes each time over the course of these six weeks.

**Human Subject Participation:**
All the participants must consent to be in the study, and participants will be protected and treated fairly throughout the study. Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant during the study, must provide a doctor's note for their safety, since they are considered a protected class (i.e., vulnerable population) by the Federal Law.

**Risks:**
There are no foreseeable; physical, psychological, social, or economic discomfort or inconvenience as risks and discomforts to you as participants of this study.

**Benefits:**
This study will aim to develop "A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity in A Multicultural Church." As a multicultural church, there are several benefits of this study both to the individual human participant, the Church, the society, and how leaders in our communities will formulate policies that will continue to advance peaceful and harmonious co-existence in our communities that are becoming more and more multicultural.

**Voluntariness:**
Participation in this study is voluntary, and you may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. You can also stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate or not

participate will have no impact on your current membership in this congregation. If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in this study, please contact me directly in person, on the phone, or via electronic communication. My contact information is at the top of this consent form. You can refuse to respond to any or all the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time at no risk to you, if there are any.

**Confidentiality:**
I will be careful to keep your information confidential and will ask you and all the focus group members to keep the discussion confidential as well. There is always a small risk of unwanted or accidental disclosure. The conversations and the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed only with your permission. Any notes, recordings, or transcriptions will be kept private. I will be the only one with access to your information. The files will be encrypted, and password protected. Sessions may be conducted via Webex and recorded**,** "In the event of accidental data disclosure, there may be legal, financial, social, or personal implications. In addition, I, the researcher, will abide by their state's mandatory reporting laws."

**Summary:**
If you have questions about this study, please contact me.

**Signature:**
Signing this paper means that you have read this, or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

| | |
|---|---|
| Signature of Person Agreeing to Participate in the Project/Study | Date Signed |

## APPENDIX D

REQUEST TO USE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT LETTER

united Theological Seminary

Enefazu-Ossai, Emmanuel <eeossai1@united.edu>

## Request to Use the - Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory!

**Enefazu-Ossai, Emmanuel** <eeossai1@united.edu> Mon, Apr 22, 2024 at 10:53 PM
To: michael.jagessar@urc.org.uk, rj.mm@urc.org.uk, urc@urc.org.uk
Cc: ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com


**Rev. Emmanuel Enefazu-Ossai**
United Theological Seminary | 4501 Denlinger Road | Dayton, OH 45426, USA.
eeossai1@united.edu
ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com
+1 765 409 6483


Attn: **Rev'd Dr. Michael N. Jagessar**
Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministry
Office of the United Reformed Church
86 Tavistock Place, London, UK.
WC1H 9RT.

Email: michael.jagessar@urc.org.uk
rj.mm@urc.org.uk
urc@urc.org.uk
Telephone: 020 7916 2020, 020 7916 8655.

Dear Sir,

**Request to Use the *Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory* for Research**

Calvary greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I humbly request your permission to use your *Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory* for my Doctor of Ministry (DMin) degree research at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH, USA where I am currently a student.

The study titled; *Developing A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity In A Multicultural Church*, aims to benefit participants with knowledge on how to have healthy interactions with persons of different cultures in their congregation.

I look forward to your kind approval.

Thank you.


**Emmanuel Enefazu-Ossai** - Principal Investigator
eeossai1@united.edu
ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com
+1 765 409 6483

## APPENDIX E

REPLY TO REQUEST FOR RESEARCH INSTRUMENT LETTER

united Theological Seminary

Enefazu-Ossai, Emmanuel <eeossai1@united.edu>

## Request to Use the - Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory!

**info** <info@urc.org.uk> Tue, Apr 23, 2024 at 5:55 AM
To: "eeossai1@united.edu" <eeossai1@united.edu>

Dear Emmanuel Enefazu-Ossai,

Thank you for your email, which has been forwarded to our Mission team.

**Kind Regards,**

**Cathy Francourt**

**Receptionist | The United Reformed Church**

86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

020 7916 2020 | reception@urc.org.uk | www.urc.org.uk

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**From:** Enefazu-Ossai, Emmanuel <eeossai1@united.edu>
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 23, 2024 3:54 AM
**To:** michael.jagessar@urc.org.uk; rj.mm@urc.org.uk; info <info@urc.org.uk>
**Cc:** ifeanyienefazu@hotmail.com
**Subject:** Request to Use the - Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory!

You don't often get email from eeossai1@united.edu. Learn why this is important

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

[Quoted text hidden]

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## APPENDIX F

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

**Research Questionnaire**

Greetings,

I humbly request your willingness to participate in a study for my Doctor of Ministry degree research at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, where I am currently a student.

The study titled; *Developing A Ministry Model That Fosters Unity In A Multicultural Church*, aims to investigate healthy interactions with persons of different cultures within the Church context.

Welcoming Diversity: Congregational Inventory

Given that our landscape and communities are becoming more diverse, congregations are faced with the challenge of how to reach out to people of different racial/ethnic/linguistic/cultural backgrounds. An important step in meeting that challenge is to ask whether your congregation is truly welcoming to all people. While your initial answer may be "Yes", intentional and focused introspection may reveal hidden barriers that can hinder people of minority ethnic backgrounds from feeling at home in your congregation. The following inventory focuses on six areas: Perceptions, Leadership, Worship, Visual, Educational, and Events to enable a process of self-reflection. It is recommended that this inventory be used by a committee or a team of interested persons.

To stimulate your discussion, using a 1-3 scale, read each statement and place your most appropriate response to the left in the space provided.

NA = not applicable; DK= don't know; 1 = not at all true; 2 = sometimes true; 3 = true, most of the time.

| **PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, VALUES – WHAT WE HOLD IN OUR MINDS AND HEARTS AFFECT OUR ACTIONS!** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S/N | ITEMS | NA | DK | NT | ST | MT |
| 1 | The healing of racism and an appreciation for racial/ethnic diversity are values of the leadership of our congregation. | | | | | |
| 2 | Opportunities for dialogue are provided about these values between our congregation and our leadership. | | | | | |
| 3 | Our leaders comprehend and communicate the way in which ethnic, economic, social, and political justice makes visible God's offer of full life for all. | | | | | |
| 4 | Our congregation is receptive to preaching, teaching, and dialogue about the harm of racism and the value of diversity. | | | | | |
| 5 | Our congregation is open to the ideas that people from other ethnic traditions bring about worship, education, community, and outreach. | | | | | |
| 6 | Our congregation is aware of our denomination's position on issues of racism, poverty, and violence | | | | | |

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| | because the positions are consistently held before the people. | | | | | |
| 7 | Members who reflect our congregations' ethnic diversity are being recruited and equipped for leadership. | | | | | |
| 8 | Our congregation addresses root causes of poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination, while also relieving immediate needs through ministries of charity, compassion, and mercy. | | | | | |
| 9a | Past attitudes/actions of prejudice and discrimination have been addressed in our congregation forthrightly and healing is taking place around these issues. | | | | | |
| 9b | We have a process of reconciliation in place when needed. | | | | | |
| **LEADERSHIP/ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE – Leaders and structure set a congregation's course.** | | | | | | |
| 10 | Our congregation's leadership promotes anti-racism, diversity, and a multicultural ethos. | | | | | |
| 11 | The leadership is conscious of diversity when selecting suppliers of items and services. | | | | | |
| 12a | Our congregation has a team that works with the leadership to address issues of racism in our congregation and society. | | | | | |
| 12b | The team has developed a strategy for addressing racism within the congregation and community. | | | | | |
| 12c | The resources of our congregation support this team. | | | | | |
| 13 | People outside our congregation's primary ethnic group are consulted about how we might address unintentional racism and become more inclusive. | | | | | |
| 14a | We have a system of greeting in place so that all those who attend receive a warm welcome. | | | | | |
| 14b | Members of the "greeting team" are educated to be welcoming to a wide variety of people. | | | | | |
| 14c | The members of the "greeting team" are representative of the ethnic make-up of our congregation. | | | | | |
| **WORSHIP – Does our worship inspire us to greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of God's people?** | | | | | | |
| 15 | Our worship, liturgies, and music incorporate a variety of ethnic/cultural traditions. | | | | | |
| 16 | We invite speakers, dramatists, musicians, etc. who represent a variety of ethnic/cultural traditions. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Our preaching addresses the sin of racism and challenges the congregation to examine themselves in light of scriptures. | | | | | |
| 18 | The Gospel message is expressed in ways relevant to diverse people. | | | | | |
| 19 | We give voice in worship to issues important to diverse people. | | | | | |
| 20 | As a congregation we welcome and befriend all visitors before, during, and after worship. | | | | | |
| **VISUAL – Visuals are strong messages. What do we see around us?** | | | | | | |
| 21 | A wide variety of ethnic people are represented in our windows, pictures, wall hangings, etc. | | | | | |
| 22 | The classrooms for young children are supplied with dolls, books, games, and other toys that represent a wide diversity of peoples and cultures. | | | | | |
| 23 | All study/work rooms and libraries have books, DVD's, etc. that represent a wide variety of ethnicities and cultures. | | | | | |
| 24 | Our displays, brochures, and publicity pieces reflect diversity. | | | | | |
| 25 | The staff and leadership visually reflect a commitment to multicultural ministry. | | | | | |
| **EDUCATIONAL – What are we reading, studying, and promoting?** | | | | | | |
| 26 | We strive to teach a respect for diversity. | | | | | |
| 27a | Our educational materials reflect a variety of ethnicities and cultures (and language groups if appropriate to our congregation.) | | | | | |
| 27b | People from various cultures and ethnicities are consulted when new curriculum or educational materials are developed. | | | | | |
| 28a | We regularly offer classes that give insight into people of different ethnicities and cultures. | | | | | |
| 28b | We are sensitive to the differences in teaching and learning styles among people from a variety of cultures and traditions. | | | | | |
| 28c | Our faith is presented in terms of the history, tradition, and contribution of minority cultures as well as the dominant culture. | | | | | |
| 29a | We offer on-site racism and diversity sensitivity training. | | | | | |
| 29b | We promote off-site racism and diversity sensitivity training for members of our congregation. | | | | | |
| 29c | We offer our resources and venue for racism and diversity awareness training | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **EVENTS – Do we schedule events to broaden our experiences and perspectives**? | | | | | | |
| 30 | Our congregation invites other congregations representing different ethnic/cultural groups to share in opportunities for outreach, recreation, and worship. | | | | | |
| 31 | Our congregation promotes time for members to visit or to participate in other ethnic/cultural groups' work, play, or worship experiences. | | | | | |
| 32 | We hold activities to celebrate the diversity already among us and to become familiar with a variety of ethnicities and cultural traditions. | | | | | |

**WORSHIP – Does our worship inspire us to greater understanding and appreciation for the diversity of God's people?**

15. Our worship, liturgies and music incorporate a variety of ethnic/cultural traditions.
16. We invite speakers, dramatists, musicians, etc. who represent a variety of ethnic/cultural traditions.
17. Our preaching addresses the sin of racism and challenges the congregation to examine themselves in light of scriptures.
18. The Gospel message is expressed in ways relevant to diverse people.
19. We give voice in worship to issues important to diverse people.
20. As a congregation we welcome and befriend all visitors before, during, and after worship.

Thank you for your time and effort given to this inventory. This exercise is intended to help your congregation, synod, or church group engage in conversation about its own reality with regard to ethnic and cultural diversity. To follow up this initial conversation, you can design ongoing reconciling actions that will serve as a guide for planning and annual evaluation. If you would like more information and guidance, kindly contact your Synod Racial Justice Advocate or the RJMM Office of the United Reformed Church at rj.mm@urc.org.uk or michael.jagessar@urc.org.uk. Telephone 020 7916 8655

The URC is a MULTICULTURAL Church committed to empowering all towards just, inclusive, renewing, and transforming intercultural mission and ministry.

RJMM/March 2009 Jagessar

[This inventory has been adapted from The Welcoming Diversity Inventory for Congregations by GRACE/RACIAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE, 183 Lakeside NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-3210]

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## APPENDIX G

LESSON OUTLINES

## Lesson One: Biblical Basis for Cultural Diversity

Scriptural Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14
Reference Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Acts 2:17; Galatians 3:28

Lesson Objective:
It is anticipated that at the end of this lesson, participants would learn and know that there is a biblical basis for cultural diversity.

Introduction:
The sum of a people's way of life is their culture. Culture is not alien with God, as He is the author of culture and by extension the diversity that is evident in culture. Cultural diversity is core to the tenets of the Bible.

Definition of Terms:
As a way of getting the class to participate, seek from the audience their input, get them to present their pre-knowledge of the title of the day's discussion, "the Biblical basis for cultural diversity."

Components of the Lesson:

I. No Division with the Godhead
II. One body, many parts
III. Neither Jews or Gentiles, nor Slave or Free

Conclusion:
Believers in Christ are enjoined to love and receive people regardless of their culture. There is no segregation of race among people of different cultures in Christ Jesus, Gal 3:28. It is certain that God is interested in people of every nation, tribe, and tongues as seen in Revelation 7:9.

Discussion / Question / Activity:
Present your understanding of the "human parts" analogy in 1 Cor 12:12–27 concerning the Church?

## Lesson Two: Fellowship as a Framework for Cultural Unity - Family Fun Sunday

Scriptural Text: Acts 2:42–47
Reference Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Psalms 133:1; Hebrews 10:25

Lesson Objective:
It is anticipated that at the end of this lesson, participants will learn that the quality of their fellowship to Christ can be seen in the quality of their fellowship with other believers, as it is not possible to love God if you do not love his children.

Introduction:
God intends his children to grow up in families and not in isolation. Our interpersonal relationships become the glue that keeps people connected to the local Church. Fellowship is not optional for a Christian as some may think. It is mandatory; hence the role and place of the church family cannot be overlooked.

Definition of Terms:
As a way of getting the class to participate, seek from the audience their input, some kind of working definition of the major terms of the lesson, fellowship, and cultural unity.

Components of the Lesson:
I. Fellowship one-with-another
II. The essence of Church fellowship
III. A 'wonderful and pleasant' experience

Conclusion:
God commends his people to be in fellowship by becoming a part of a local church. "Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:46–47." The writer of Hebrews presents that members at a local church have an obligation to one another, they are to provoke one another to good works and to exhort one another to live consistent lives worthy of God. So, believers are commanded not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, Hebrews 10:25. According to 1 John 1:7, we are admonished that if we walk in the Light as Christ himself is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another.

Discussion / Question / Activity:
Name the likely avenues or ways that fellowship among brethren in the Church can be expressed.

## Lesson Three: Historical Benefits of Cultural Diversity

Scriptural Text: Roman 15:30–31; Genesis 1:1, 11:1–9; Colossians 3:11
Reference Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Psalm 133

Lesson Objective:
This lesson aims to help participants of this study understand the benefits inherent in the diversity of our culture and the place of history in our shared story of culture and cultural diversity.

Introduction:
Lessons in history are important. History or historical accounts help us to get a glimpse of events in the past, as they help us to understand the present, while at the same time helping to shed light on the likely events or situations of the future, including the exchange of ideas, and practices across diverse culture group.

Definition of Terms:
Allow the audience to give a working definition of the terms used.

Components of the Lesson:

I. The Babel experience
II. Hints from a historical figure – Bishop Ajayi Crowther
III. In the beginning, God created …

Conclusion:
The Babel experience brings to bear and emphasizes the story of creation. In that we are all one. In the beginning we are one, despite the language difference after the Babel experience, it advances that regardless of our current cultural affiliations we are one and "… there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all." Col 3:11.

Discussion / Question / Activity:
What is your idea of a multicultural Church?

## Lesson Four: Spiritual Disciplines as Framework for Cultural Diversity

Scriptural Text: James 5:16.
Reference Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

Lesson Objective:
Understanding and embracing spiritual disciplines as practices that fosters unity in Christian communities.

Introduction:
The early Church grew in leaps and bounds because believers lived out together. They spent time together to learn the word of God, to pray, and to worship the Lord and to fellowship with one another. When there is a proper understanding, a Christian will know the interconnection between the spiritual discipline of prayer, service, and worship and how a sound engagement with these can help to bolster a loving relationship with people of different culture. In 1 John 4:20–21, we are told that when we love brothers and sister whom we can see, then our testimony of loving God we have not seen becomes genuine.

Definition of Terms:
As a way of getting the class to participate, seek from the audience their input, some kind of working definition of the major terms of the lesson, fellowship, and cultural unity.

Components of the Lesson:
I. The place of Prayer
II. The place of Service
III. The place of Worship

Conclusion:
There are lots of spiritual disciplines practiced by Christians; prayer, service, and worship are only a part of the many that without doubt can foster unity among a diverse congregation of believers. Believers become a loving, and caring community when they practice these disciplines, the psalmist would say; “let us go into the house of the Lord”. Psalm 122:1. Christian fellowship involves spending time together to grow closer to the Lord and to other believers. Acts 2:42. The idolatry of individualism has influenced many to think that one can grow without others. As a framework for Cultural unity, one must not forsake the cultural unity that binds us together; that is coming together in Christian fellowship.

Discussion / Question / Activity:
In your own view, is cultural diversity advantageous or disadvantageous and why”

**Lesson Five: The Church as a System**

Scriptural Text: 1 Peter 4:10; Psalms 139:13–14
Reference Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Ecclesiastes 4:12

Lesson Objective:
It is anticipated that at the end of this lesson, participants would learn and know that the Church is a dynamic system that embraces, promotes, and operates to understand the

biblical and theological basis impacting cultural diversity within the Church and the community.

Introduction:

From the days of the Church fathers, the Church has always had the ambience of a system, because of her different sets of activities, an organized entity with series of liturgies or rituals, teachings or doctrines, the structure of her leadership and of the faith community, the connectedness with like-minded organizations primarily aimed at attaining spiritual growth within her members and the community.

Definition of Terms:

As a way of getting the class to participate, seek from the audience their input, some kind of working definition of the major terms of the day's lesson.

Components of the Lesson:

I. Stewards of the manifold grace of God
II. Share your giftings and Grow the Church
III. One Body in Christ

Conclusion:

There is no better time than now to remind the Church of her place in integrating people who walk through her doors weekly that we ought to be good stewards of the grace that has been revealed to us. In our collective responsibilities of our roles as stewards

Discussion / Question / Activity:

How does 1 Cor 12:12–27 represent or advocate for a multicultural Church?

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